

**RAVEN
PATROL
OF
BOB'S HILL**



**CHARLES
PIERCE
BURTON**









WE'D BETTER KEEP A FIRE GOING ALL NIGHT," I
DECIDED, "TO SCARE AWAY THE BEARS" [Page 229]

RAVEN PATROL OF BOB'S HILL

BY
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"THE BOB'S HILL BRAVES," "THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S
HILL," "CAMP BOB'S HILL."

With Illustrations by
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To

**CHARLES H. NORTON, SCOUTMASTER,
TROOP 3, AURORA, ILLINOIS,
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA,
IN APPRECIATION OF HIS WORK AMONG BOYS**

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RAVEN PATROL OF BOB'S HILL

CHAPTER I

MEETING AT THE CAVE

“**T**HE meetin' will come to order.”

The members of Raven Patrol, Boy Scouts of America, were squatting around in the cave, with Skinny, our patrol leader, trying to keep us quiet so that he could hold a meeting.

We knew that there was going to be a meeting for the Sign had said so, chalked up on the side of our barn, as big as life. There was a circle and in the center of the circle was a crow, only it was white on account of the chalk. Above the crow were the figures 18 and below, 10. That is our Sign, only sometimes we have a tomahawk in the center when we are Indians and sometimes, a coffin when we are bandits. The circle means the cave and the 18 and 10 meant that we were to meet at the cave at ten o'clock on the eighteenth day of the month.

Meeting at the Cave

We didn't feel much like keeping quiet, especially Bill Wilson, who can make more noise than anybody and puts in a lot of time practising.

"I said the meetin' will come to order," yelled Skinny once more, louder than before.

"Maybe it will and then again maybe it won't," growled Bill.

When Bill said that Skinny drew a hatchet which he carried in his belt for a tomahawk and struck it against the rocky sides and roof of the cave until the sparks flew like everything. After that we were quiet except Bill, who kept sort of muttering to himself.

Skinny crawled to the cave entrance, through which we could see the water of the brook go dancing past, making what we think is the sweetest music in all the world, unless it is the dinner bell when we are hungry. Then he turned and held up one hand.

"S-s-st!" he hissed. "Mum's the word!"

We waited while he put out his head and looked up and down the ravine.

"'Tis well," said he, when he had come back without finding the enemy. "Let be what is."

"We are now holdin' a meetin'," he went on. "Are we all here, Mr. Secretary, I mean Scribe?"

He most always forgets and says secretary instead of scribe because I used to be secretary of the Band. It means the same thing, anyhow.

"Everybody but me," I told him.

The fellows laughed, all but Skinny. He put his hand on his tomahawk again and the boys became so still you could have heard a clock strike, if there had been one. Then he seemed to change his mind and stood up with his arms folded like a bandit and his head nearly touching the roof of the cave in its highest part.

"Fellers," said he, "we've seen the Sign and we have obeyed. Is there any business to come before the meetin'?"

He looked around but nobody spoke. We didn't know what the meeting was for. Signs don't tell why; they only point.

"If nobody else has anything to bring up," he went on, looking at me fierce-like, "I want to say a few things about the scribe. He isn't on to his

job; he's asleep at the switch; he's balmy in the bean."

The boys looked at one another and at me, and I looked at them, but we didn't know what to make of it. Before I could say anything Skinny began again.

"The scribe is supposed to write the doin's of the Band, ain't he? Well, why doesn't he do it?"

"I did," I told him, "and you know it just as well as I do. Didn't I tell all about finding the cave and licking the Gingham Ground Gang, going out West and what we did there, joining the Boy Scouts and all that?"

"Maybe you did," he said. "I ain't saying that you didn't but there is a lot more that you haven't told. You never told what we did when Tom Chapin came home from school that time. Say, did you?"

"You mean about the——"

"You know I do. You never told about that."

"That wasn't anything much."

"It ain't for the secretary to say what is much and what isn't," said he. "It is for him to do it. That is what a secretary is for, and that is what a

scribe is for. And you never told about the ghost we saw when we passed the burying ground one time up by the old Quaker Meetin' House and how scared Bill Wilson was."

"Aw, I wasn't half as scared as you were," Bill told him.

"Say, did you?" asked Skinny, not paying any attention to Bill, who is only assistant patrol leader.

"Well,—" I began, but Benny broke in before I could get started.

"And Pedro never told about that time Skinny went to see his girl," said he, "and she——"

The boys set up such a shout at that, Benny couldn't finish and Skinny had to do a lot of pounding to get them quiet again.

"I'll write that in invisible ink, made of lemon juice," I told them, "so folks can't read it."

"Invisible nothin'!" said Skinny. "I guess a feller can go on an errand for his mother if he wants to without having it put in the minutes of the meetin'. Besides lemon juice is better for drinking than making invisible ink in the summer time."

It made me kind of sore to have Skinny talk like

that and I was just starting to say something about maybe they'd better get another secretary, when Hank spoke.

"Skinny—I mean Mr. Chairman," said he, "we all think that Pedro has done first rate at the scribe business and that is the reason we want him to tell some more. A lot of things have happened that he hasn't told about. I can think of one right now. Don't you remember the time we started a gold mine at Peck's Falls? That wasn't any fun, eh, Bill? O, no; maybe not."

Say, I'd forgotten all about that and I don't see how I could, because it was important.

"I make a motion," Hank went on, "that Pedro be told to write up some more doings of the Band, and not to forget the gold mine."

"And that if he doesn't do it," added Bill, "we'll put a head on him."

That is why I am writing this history. But first I shall have to tell you who we are and where we live, for if you haven't read about the other doings of the Band you will be wondering about it.

Some folks say that there isn't any such place as

Bob's Hill. They don't know what they are talking about. It is right back of our house, so I ought to know, I guess. A man named Robert, or Bob, Briggs used to own it. He was a brother of Governor Briggs of Massachusetts. That was long ago but the hill still is called Bob's Hill, especially by us boys.

It is up in the northwest corner of Massachusetts near where you can see "Greylock" marked on the map. Greylock is the highest mountain in the state and it looks the best from our village, or from Bob's Hill. The hill is really the beginning of it, and Bob's Hill begins in our garden, as I have said before. Park Street runs north and south along the foot of the hill, with Benny Wade living on the east side of the street and me, John Alexander Smith, on the west side, nearly opposite.

Once, when President McKinley came to our town on a visit, the soldiers climbed up on Bob's Hill and fired a salute as he drove up Park Street. But that was nothing. The fellows do that every Fourth of July, at four o'clock in the morning. Folks don't like it very well when we do it but it was all right

for the President. We don't understand it and Skinny thinks it isn't patriotic. Skinny is strong for our country because one of his ancestors was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill.

Peck's Falls and our cave are back from Bob's Hill about a mile. You can get there by going north on Park Street; then west on the road that leads past the burying ground and the old Quaker Meeting House as far as the west road. If you turn south on that road, after a while you will come to a little bridge over a brook. That is Peck's Brook. It is like going around three sides of a square.

But the shortest way is to go up through Blackinton's orchard, straight back from Park Street. You first go up the drive until you get to Blackinton's barn; then turn into the orchard, watching out for the cow which is sometimes loose there. A path sort of winds through the orchard, that being a part of Bob's Hill and steep. Soon you will come to a fence, and the rest of the way up it is nothing but hill, where you will have to dig the soles of your shoes into the ground and climb like

sixty until after a while you come out on top, all out of breath and glad to rest a minute and look around, especially if you never have been there before.

We boys like to sit down on top of the hill and talk things over, when we don't feel like going as far as the cave. At such times, right at our feet we can see the village, straggling up and down the narrow valley and beginning to climb the hills on each side. Beyond the village is East Mountain, extending in a long range north and south. It isn't more than a quarter of a mile across from where the Greylock range begins at Bob's Hill to where the hills begin sloping up to East Mountain, in the Hoosac range. Up and down the narrow valley between, we can see from North Adams to Cheshire, with Hoosic River broadening out into a pond here and there, where it stops to turn the wheels of some big mill.

On the west, Greylock Peak stands head and shoulders above the rest of the range, which reaches out giant arms north and south. The old mountain smiles down on us, maybe with light clouds flitting

across his face, seeming to say, "Come on, fellows. Hurry along up to the cave. I belong to the Scouts, you know."

The cave is in Peck's Falls woods and the woods are the beginning of the wooded part of the mountainside, with green fields sloping up from Bob's Hill, crossed here and there by stone walls. Plunkett's woods are just over the brow of Bob's Hill and a little to the south.

It is fun to have a cave and sit there underground, with no school or anything to bother. Tom Chapin found the cave by falling into it when he was looking for berries, and if we hadn't heard him yell, he might be there now, for he wasn't able to get out without help. He was our leader then because he could lick any boy in the village, yes, or at the Gingham Ground, but he went away to school and we elected Skinny captain, and afterwards, patrol leader, to take his place.

Sometimes we play that we are Indians; sometimes, bandits, and sometimes, Boy Scouts, but there isn't very much difference. It is all fun, and

fun in the woods and fields, which is better than in the house, or even our barn.

Skinny's real name is Gabriel Miller. Everybody calls him Skinny because he is so fat, although he isn't nearly as fat as he used to be, on account of climbing up and down Bob's Hill so much. He wouldn't know what you meant if you called him Gabriel. But sometimes when we are playing bandits at the cave we find a paper with writing on it tacked to a tree, signed, "Gory Gabe, the Bandit King." Then we know that there will be something doing right away.

When Skinny calls himself "Gory Gabe"—well, look out! That is all I've got to say about it.

There are eight fellows in our patrol, Skinny, Bill, Hank, Benny, Harry, Wally, Chuck, and the scribe, who is myself. The folks call me John and sometimes when what they are going to say is very important, John Alexander; but the fellows call me Pedro.

Benny is the littlest one in the bunch, being a year or two younger than the rest of us, but we

don't care about that. We couldn't get along without Benny. He is always right there when we need him. Mr. Norton is our Scoutmaster, and the best one that ever happened.

After the meeting was over, we crawled out of the cave through a narrow entrance from the water side, stepping on some stones in the brook to keep from getting our feet wet. When the water is high, as sometimes happens in the spring of the year or after a big storm, the brook becomes a raging, roaring torrent, which is fierce to look at and almost fills the cave entrance as it races past.

Then it is hard to get in from the water side, although it can be done. It is better, if you have your old clothes on, to go up the ravine a little way to where there is a pile of brush, looking as if it just happened to be there. That brush covers a hole, the hole Tom Chapin fell into. You can let yourself down into the hole by a rope which we have kept there since a big flood almost drowned us out. There is room for only two or three boys at a time in that hole but there is another hole leading from there through the earth and rock into the cave

beyond, and if you are not much larger than Skinny you can wriggle through.

When we had come out of the cave, we stood for a moment on the edge of the stream looking around. Just above was a rocky cliff, almost straight up and down, as much as fifty, or maybe seventy-five, feet high. It reached solid half across the ravine; then broke away below, leaving a great jagged archway through which the brook poured. The arch breaks off a little short of the opposite slope of the ravine, making it almost but not quite a natural bridge, high above the water.

Say, Benny jumped from the end once when a tramp—but I told about that in some of the doings of the Band.

We took off our clothes and after splashing around a while in a little pool of water, as clear as crystal, which had formed after pouring over a sort of rocky dam, we made our way up stream, under the arch, until we stood, with water almost up to our necks, in a larger pool on the other side, right at the foot of Peck's Falls.

A cliff, a hundred feet high, blocked our way.

From the top of it the brook came tumbling down with a rush and roar, not in one long drop into the pool below but in a lot of little falls, one after another, as it foamed down from rock to rock, playing hide-and-seek with the sunshine, or chasing itself like a kitten after its tail.

Across the pool, opposite, was the rocky arch and fifty feet up, or more, we could see a narrow ledge, above which the top of the cliff is shaped something like a pulpit. This is called Pulpit Rock. A path through the woods winds among the trees, the roar of the falls growing louder and louder, until it comes to the open chasm that is almost bridged by Pulpit Rock; then it leads out on the narrow ledge to the pulpit part.

It is great to edge your way out on that narrow ledge, feeling dizzy-like and scared, until you stand just opposite the falls, leaning back against the pulpit and almost holding your breath, while far below the water rushes beneath the arch toward our cave.

Suddenly as we stood there splashing water, Skinny reached out and grabbed a piece of wood

which was being driven around in a big circle by the force of the falls, before escaping through the archway.

“S-s-st!” he hissed, holding it up for us to see.

It was only a piece of board which had tumbled over the cliff with the falls and not much to see, so we looked at Skinny, not knowing what he meant.

He tried to draw his tomahawk, forgetting for a second that he had left his clothes on the bank below the cave. Then he gave a war whoop. Before he had finished we all were yelling and whooping, Bill Wilson making more noise than anybody. The war whoops sounded great in among the rocks of the ravine. When we had stopped for breath we looked at Skinny to find out what we were yelling about.

“Ugh!” he exclaimed, jabbering a lot of Indian talk. “Wood cut by paleface. Paleface somewhere up in mountain looking for Injun’s cave. Injun scalp paleface; no let find cave. Injun braves follow big chief.”

With that he let out another war whoop and, yelling for all we were worth, we scrambled down

the rock-strewn stream until we came to the place where we had left our clothes.

As soon as we had dressed we made our way up the east side of the ravine; then around through the woods to the top of the falls. From there, carrying our shoes and stockings, we splashed and climbed up the stream through the woods, until finally we came to another waterfall. It was not like the other, nor so high, but pretty, just the same, as the brook poured in a wide sheet of water from a pasture above.

It was in this pasture that Tom Chapin once tried to paralyze a bull by the power of the human eye and came near being paralyzed himself. We took good care to see that there was no bull around when we carefully put our heads above the edge of the ravine and looked for the enemy.

Old Greylock seemed very near but there was nothing else in sight except some crows floating around in the air and a bunch of cows in the shade of some trees, chewing their cuds.

"Charge, my braves!" yelled Skinny. "Paleface no good. Get um scalp."

Whooping and yelling, we charged.

"Here, you little rascals, stop chasing those cows!" an angry voice shouted, just as we had them almost surrounded.

We could see him coming, a big man, shaking a club at us, and it didn't seem best to play Indian any more.

"It's most dinner time, anyhow," said Skinny.
"I'll beat you to the twin stones."

CHAPTER II

AN INVISIBLE MESSAGE

PERHAPS you will remember when Tom Chapin went away to school, on account of some money which we found at a hermit's hut, up near the Bellows Pipe. The Bellows Pipe is at the south end of a high narrow valley, called the Notch, between two ranges of mountains. The wind almost always blows there, making it seem like a bellows.

Tom Chapin was the oldest of us boys and he was our captain, so we gave him the money, especially as the hermit turned out to have been his uncle and would have given it to him, anyhow. Tom didn't have any father, and his mother had a hard time getting along until that happened.

"You take most of the money, mother," Tom told her, "enough to make it easier for you, and start me in school somewhere with what is left. An

education is as good as money in the bank; Pedro's father told me so. Maybe I can get to be an engineer, or something; then you won't have to do a thing all day long but sit around and fold your hands."

"I'm afraid I shouldn't exactly like that," she said. "I have no desire to be idle. If I can live to see my son take an honorable place among men, that will be better than money in the bank to me."

So they fixed it that way and Tom went to school. He learned a lot, for he is smart. Every vacation he gets a job somewhere to help out and so cannot do much meeting with the Band. Just the same, we always have a great time whenever he comes home.

There is a big elm tree on Park Street, just inside the yard north of Benny Wade's house. It is a whopper, with branches reaching almost across the street. Part way up the great trunk is a hole just big enough to let our hands go in, with a kind of nest inside. That hole is our postoffice.

One morning, when I was piling wood out near our barn, I saw Skinny go down the street toward the tree. He didn't stop or say anything, only

whistled and made some motions with his hands which I didn't understand. But I hustled to get my piling done; I knew that something was up.

Ten minutes later the rest of the Ravens came along. I could hear Bill yelling to Skinny when they were crossing the bridge. They stopped for me and then hurried across the street and down to the big tree, where Skinny and Benny were waiting.

"Let the scribe see if there is a message," said Skinny, when we all had gathered around the tree.

I started to put my hand into the hole, when he hissed like a snake.

"Wait," said he. "We're watched."

We were, too, because Benny's mother was peeking out the front door to see what we were doing. In a moment she went in; then Skinny looked up the street and Bill looked down, while the others gathered close around to keep folks from seeing.

"Now."

I reached in and felt around until I got hold of a paper; then pulled it out and looked at it. The paper was blank. There wasn't a thing on it that

I could see, but I didn't let on that I couldn't read it. I handed it to Skinny.

"Read it out loud, Bill," said he, passing it on.

"O, I don't want to," said Bill. "I can't read after nine o'clock in the morning. Here, Hank, you read it."

Hank glanced at it and passed it to Benny, and so it went around the circle until it came to Skinny again. He looked at us sad-like; then folded his arms like a bandit.

"Bring fire," he shouted, "that the Chief may read. I have spoken."

I put my hand in the hole again and drew out a piece of candle which I lighted. Skinny held the paper close to the flame, while the others waited, gathered close around to keep off the wind.

Suddenly as we looked we all gave such a shout that Mrs. Wade came to the door again; then shook her head and went back, as if boys were too much for her to understand. Letters were beginning to come out in brown on the paper; soon whole words formed, and Skinny motioned for me to put the candle back.

"Fellers," said he, "the Tree has given up its message. Read, ponder, and mum's the word."

He passed the paper around as before, everybody reading. Then when it had come to him again he tore it into little pieces and tossed them into the air for the wind to scatter.

"To the bridge," he shouted.

This is what the message said:

"At the north end of the bridge, near the west sidewalk, is a flat stone. Lift that stone if you dast and what you find will be yourn. But let no one see what you see. To be seen is to die. Beware!"

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "That is some message, all right, all right. If we find a worm under the stone, let's go fishin'."

"And if it's a cricket," put in Benny, "let's play ball."

Skinny didn't say anything but led the way toward the bridge. It didn't take long for us to get there. Hoosic River crosses Park Street a little south of our house. First comes the railroad track, then the bridge. We found the stone easily but had to wait

quite a while before looking because there were so many people on the street.

Finally, the coast seemed clear and we lifted the stone. There was a worm and there was a cricket, but there was something else, too,—something which made us all gather around close to see. It was a letter, addressed to the Band, and it was in Tom's handwriting.

When I saw what it was I snatched it and ran, the whole Band chasing after me, yelling like Indians. Down the railroad I went like the wind; up a cross road; then into a lane which leads up into Plunkett's woods.

Through the woods I crashed, with Bill Wilson coming after me in big leaps, ahead of the others and gaining on me with every jump. Veering toward the east and putting on more speed, I soon came out of the woods again, ran across an open field, tumbled over a fence and in a minute found myself on the very tiptop of Bob's Hill. The whole village was spread beneath, looking as if with one big jump I could land in our garden but I didn't have time to do any jumping. Bill fell on

me like a thousand of brick and the others, coming up, took the letter away.

We lay there for a few minutes, panting, too tired and hot and out of breath to say anything, or do anything. All we wanted was to sprawl out on the grass and let the cool breeze fan across our faces, while great, white clouds came sailing over Greylock toward us. Then the letter was handed to me, being scribe, and I read it out loud to the boys, sitting there on top of Bob's Hill. The first few lines are all I need to put down here.

"Dear boys," Tom wrote. "I am going home next Friday and I want you to pull off some Big Doings before I have to commence work. Tell Skinny to get busy and think up something. What he can't think of isn't worth doing, anyhow."

Skinny swelled all up over Tom's letter. "You bet I can think of something," he told us. "And take it from me, there are going to be big doings around Bob's Hill when the time comes."

"Will it be some 'Gory Gabe' business, Skinny?" asked Benny.

"I don't know yet. A feller can't think up some-

thing big all in a minute; but it will be something, and don't you forget it."

"We might meet him with a band of music at Maple Grove and march in," I said. "I can play the jew's-harp and Bill is great on the mouth organ. Benny can drum fine."

"Aw, that's too tame," said Bill. "We want something fierce."

"All right," I told him. "If you don't like what I say, let's see you think of something."

"Great snakes!" he shouted, after a minute. "What if we could wreck a train? Only folks might not like it very well."

"The Band isn't to wreck trains, or do things like that," Skinny told him. "We wouldn't do such a thing. We're Boy Scouts now. What we want is to rescue folks, not to hurt 'em."

"Well, that's what I mean. How are you going to rescue them unless something happens that makes them want to be rescued? Don't you remember how we stopped the train just in time to save the passengers once, after we had rolled a big stone down

Bob's Hill onto the track? It would be great fun to rescue Tom. Say, he'd be surprised."

But Skinny shook his head. "That was different," he said. "We didn't mean to wreck the train when we started the stone down the hill. Besides, my folks came near licking me for it."

"We might have a fire," put in Benny. "I remember when Skinny set the Methodist church on fire. It scared him 'most to death."

"What if it did? I guess anybody would have been scared. There is a time to be scared and a time to be brave. That was one of the scary times."

"Blackinton's barn would make a swell fire," Harry said, "if it would only catch. Tom would like it; but he might get here in the daytime, maybe, and a fire looks better at night."

"How about the schoolhouse?" asked Bill. "A fire like that would look good any old time. Besides, that wouldn't do any harm."

"Nixy on the fire," said Skinny. "If Blackinton's barn, or even the schoolhouse, should get on fire, we'd put it out; that's what we'd do, and maybe we'd all get Carnegie hero medals, or something."

Bill looked disgusted but he didn't say anything more.

"I'll tell you what," Skinny went on after a little. "Let's take possession of Bob's Hill in the name of our country. We discovered it, didn't we? Well, when explorers discover a new land they always plant their country's flag there and take possession of the land in the name of their king. I read it in a book."

"We haven't any king," I told him. "We wouldn't have such a thing in this country. Besides, it's too late. We discovered Bob's Hill so long ago I've forgotten when it happened. There ain't anything more left for folks to discover."

"What of that? We can take possession of it, anyhow, in the name of—of——"

"Raven Patrol," said Hank, seeing that Skinny was stuck.

"No—the people. We'll take possession of it in the name of the people. Betcher life the people rule in this country instead of any king."

"I thought that the president ruled."

"The people hire a president to run things for them. Teacher told me so."

"We might play that we had a king," said Benny. "It sounds better to take possession in the name of somebody."

"Who, us? The Band? Raven Patrol play we had a king? Benny Wade, you could be hung for that. You 'most ought to be put out of the Band. That's treason; that is. I guess the Minute Men didn't say anything like that when they stood behind a fence on Bunker Hill, waiting to see the whites of the enemy's eyes."

"I didn't mean any harm; honest, I didn't, Skinny," Benny told him. He didn't, either. Benny wouldn't do any treason business. "Bunker Hill is different. I wouldn't have a real king any more than you would—not if George Washington stood right there on that stone and told me to."

"You'd better not, if you know when you are well off. You wouldn't get a chance. George Washington wouldn't tell you such a thing as that. He hadn't any use for kings. George Washington

could lick any king that walked on two legs; yes, with one hand tied behind his back."

That settled the king business. Skinny never would stand for anything like that.

When Tom's train came in from Pittsfield we were all on hand to meet it. Skinny had his rope along and we couldn't think at first what he was going to do with it.

"I am going to lasso him," he told us, when we asked. "You be ready to surround him the minute he gets off and we'll march him through town. I guess he'll know the Band is on earth."

We set up a cheering as the train slowed down at the station and we saw Tom on the platform, waving at us.

"Ready, fellers," said Skinny. "Now!" he yelled, and threw the rope.

If the train hadn't backed up a little just then, that would have been the best throw Skinny ever made. The loop circled through the air, knocked Tom's hat off, then dropped over the head and shoulders of a Gingham Ground lady who was waiting to get on the train. It was great, only the

Band didn't wait to see. As she gave an awful yell, Skinny dropped his end of the rope and slipped through the depot like a flash, we chasing after. It didn't seem best to stay around.

Tom caught up with us at Park Street and we surrounded him there. After we had talked for a few minutes we started up the street, shouting and cheering, Bill Wilson making more noise than anybody.

"Believe me, it sounds good to hear you fellows again," said Tom, laughing; he was so happy; but what is the matter with Bill? He isn't making any noise. Are you sick, Bill?"

Bill had just opened his mouth to yell for the third time, "What's the matter with Tom Chapin? He's all right." He stood there a second with his mouth open; then closed it; took a long breath, and began. Say, the woman that Skinny lassoed wasn't in it with Bill. It was awful, and all up and down the street folks came running out of the stores.

"Gee, Bill, now you've done it," said Skinny. "Can't you see we are standing in front of the marshal's office?"

Just then the door opened and the marshal came running out. As Skinny said, there is a time to be scared and a time to be brave; but we didn't have any chance to think about it or to run. He looked us over for a minute and his eyes seemed to twinkle when he saw who it was.

"I don't like to interfere with Young America unnecessarily," said he, finally, "but don't you think you'd better save some of that noise for the Fourth of July and give folks a chance to hear themselves think and to get rested up?"

We looked at Skinny to see how he felt about it because it won't do to fool with the marshal when he has his uniform on. I saw him sort of smiling to himself as if he was thinking of when we made them ring the fire bell at four o'clock one Fourth of July morning.

"In the name of the people of the United States and of the late lamented George Washington," he went on, "I command you to disperse and to reassemble immediately at Howland's drug store where, in order that peace may be maintained, you will be served with ice cream soda at my expense."

That ended the parade for we were too busy at the drug store during the next ten minutes to think of anything else.

"Now, remember, fellers," Skinny told us, while the marshal was paying for the soda, "don't wait for any Sign but meet at the big tree at ten o'clock to-morrow, ready for business."

"Shall I bring my drum?" Benny whispered. "'Cause why; maybe if we make noise enough the marshal will buy us some more soda water."

"Betcher life bring your drum, and bring your flag. There is going to be something doing to-morrow.

"And, Benny," he added, "you live nearest. Sneak back around to the depot and see if you can find my rope. That's a good feller."

CHAPTER III

THE SILENT THREE

IT is easier for some folks to think than it is for others; anyhow, it seems that way. Being scribe, I tried my best to think of some big thing to do for Tom, and all that I could think of was to go trout fishing in one of the brooks on the other side of the mountain and to go swimming up in the Basin.

With Skinny it is different. He can think of more things in five minutes than we can do in all day and, as Tom said, what he can't think of isn't worth doing. He thought of a dozen other things but he was bound to take possession of Bob's Hill for the first one, although that didn't seem much to me, and to plant Old Glory there.

"What's the use?" I told him. "Bob's Hill already belongs to somebody or other; Mr. Plunkett, maybe."

"Belongs to nothin'! We discovered it, I guess. We put it on the map, didn't we? Nobody ever heard of Bob's Hill until you told about the doings of the Band."

We didn't need any Sign for the meeting next day. I was out in the back yard, hurrying to get a lot of wood piled before ten o'clock, when I saw the marshal stop at our gate to speak to my father. They looked my way once when they were talking and sort of laughed but it didn't worry me any. I knew that I hadn't been doing anything. The police can't do a thing to you if you are straight. Then he crossed the street and went down toward the big tree. He hadn't been out of my sight more than two minutes when he came back again, walking fast as if he had forgotten something.

By that time it was almost ten o'clock and I started for Benny's on a run. I could see some of the other boys coming down the street, and over across the bridge, not in sight yet, I could hear Bill Wilson. Skinny and Tom were the last to come.

"Have you looked for a message?" asked Skinny, when we all had gathered around. "There ain't

any but you always have to look. That is the way bandits do, even when they know there isn't any."

"I thought we were going to be explorers," I told him.

"What's the difference? Besides, explorers can look for messages, can't they, just as well as bandits?"

"Not much they can't, when they are discovering a new country where there ain't any folks to write messages, and that's what we are doing."

"Well, I am going to look, anyhow."

He glanced up and down the street to make sure that nobody could see; then put his hand through the hole in the tree and felt around. A surprised look came over his face and he pulled out a message. It wasn't written in invisible ink, either, for on the outside in big letters we could see the words, "Gory Gabe, the Bandit King."

When Skinny found that message where he hadn't expected anything, he was almost paralyzed at first and stood staring at it with his mouth open. Then he turned to us.

"You fellers think you are smart, don't you? I know who did it. You can't fool me."

But he knew more than we did. We were just as surprised as Skinny was. Not one of us knew anything about that letter and we told him so. He believed us at last and was more surprised than ever.

"Who did write it, then?"

"Read it," said Bill. "Maybe it will tell."

Without a word Skinny tore it open and read, his eyes growing bigger every second. Then he handed it to Bill, who kept it so long that I snatched it out of his hand. This is what the letter said:

"Gory Gabe, the Bandit King:

"BEWARE! We are on to your little game. Draw back ere it's too late, or Prepare to DIE.

"THE SILENT THREE."

At the bottom, drawn with ink, was a big, black hand.

"Fellers," said Skinny, solemnly, when we all had looked and stood staring at one another, wondering what it meant, "we are up against the real

thing this time, and no mistake. It's the Black Hand and they are going to kidnap us. The Black Hand is the worst thing in the world. Maybe we hadn't better do it."

"What is the Black Hand, anyhow?" I asked.

"Why—er—it's the Black Hand, that's all. It's worse than ghosts, almost. It kidnaps folks and sticks red hot needles into them and then kills them unless their friends pay a lot of money."

"Aw, what are you afraid of?" said Bill. "Some one is trying to fool us."

"Fool nothin'! The Black Hand never fools."

"Maybe there is some more to it," said Tom, "written in invisible ink."

"Bring fire," shouted Skinny.

I pulled out the candle and, after lighting it, held both sides of the paper up to the heat but no more writing came out.

"I'll tell you what let's do," said Skinny, finally.

"We'll not go straight up to Bob's Hill. Whoever it is, will be watching us. It wouldn't be discovering anything to go straight to it, anyhow. We must happen to find it, just like Balboa happened to find

the Pacific Ocean when he climbed a hill and looked around, and LaSalle climbed up on Starved Rock, out in Illinois, and took possession of everything in sight."

That is why Raven Patrol—eight boys, not counting Tom Chapin—instead of going straight back through Blackinton's orchard, first marched north almost to the Gingham Ground. Then, when no one was looking, we turned into a little path that led up through the woods—the one Bill Wilson took when he was lost on Greylock that time, with a sprained ankle, and we found him by his smoke signals.

After a while we came out on the west road, then turned south again and marched along until we were opposite Peck's Falls and the cave. By that time we had forgotten all about the Black Hand.

"Fellers," shouted Skinny, waving a stick and pointing toward the east, "methinks yonder is a fair land, flowing with milk and honey. Let's discover it."

"There's a lot of milkweed in the pasture," Bill told him, "but there ain't any honey unless we can

find a bumblebees' nest in the ground, which if we do we'll do the flowing, believe me."

Skinny didn't say a word until we had come to the next stone wall and had climbed to the top, and he didn't say anything then, only pointed. Some cows were standing there in the pasture looking at us, all but one, who was trying to knock a bee off her left ear with one of her hind feet.

"What did I tell you about the milk and honey?" said he, when we had looked.

"'Tain't flowing, anyhow," grumbled Bill.

"Ain't it? Charge, my braves," shouted Skinny. "Watch for the whites of their eyes and give 'em Bunker Hill; but spare the women and children."

We charged with a yell. There was a sound of scampering hoofs, as the milk and honey "flowed" to the other end of the pasture, and in less time than it takes to tell it we were climbing the opposite wall.

Then we formed in line with Benny and his drum in front, followed by the scribe carrying the flag. The other boys marched after us, keeping step to the drum, except Skinny. He hustled back and forth in every direction, looking for the enemy.

When we had reached the twin stones, we gave him a boost to the top of the biggest one and waited while he stood there with his hands doubled up like a field glass, spying out the country.

He looked west to where Greylock lifted his head into the blue of the sky. He looked north and saw the old Quaker Meeting House, standing like a sentinel in one corner of the cemetery. He turned to the south and gazed long into Plunkett's woods, dark and cool and, maybe, full of Indians. Finally, he turned and looked east to where we knew Bob's Hill was, although it didn't seem like a hill because we were on the high side.

"'Tis well," said he, climbing down. "Forward, and mum's the word."

Without making a sound, we crept forward and soon came to a fence, beyond which was what looked like a little hill, maybe twenty feet high. Up the slope we charged, Skinny and Bill leading the way.

At the top we stopped running and stopped yelling for right at our feet, far below, were the village and the busy valley, reaching for miles up and down Hoosic River. We were at the very top of Bob's

Hill. The air was so clear that we could see all the way to North Adams and pick out the spot on the east mountain range where Hoosac Tunnel begins.

In the woods above the east end of the tunnel, ten miles away, we knew that a mountain stream was pouring over some twin falls, hurrying to join Deerfield river. Across from where we stood, on the opposite side of the village, in a grove of trees which reached from there up the mountainside, was the Basin, where we go swimming—the big boys in the Big Basin and the little boys in the little one, only the big one is littler than the little one but deeper.

It all looked good to the Band and we stood there several minutes, thinking that, maybe, we'd go swimming pretty soon. Then Skinny drew us up in line.

"Fellers," said he, "my brave men, we've come to the end of our journey. This hill is a new land, the one we've been looking for. Let's take possession of it in the name of our country, the United States of America, the greatest and best country in

all the world. But first we must drive off the Indians. Follow me."

He dropped to his hands and knees and began to crawl along the brow of the hill, careful not to make any noise except that once in a while he would stand up and strike right and left with his stick. This was when he had found some of the enemy.

"Injuns!" yelled Bill, springing to his feet and whacking away with his stick.

We all did the same, and part of the time crawling without a sound and part of the time yelling and fighting like sixty, we made our way along the slope; then crossed over the top, and back on the other side, stopping finally at the very highest point on the hill.

"Fellers," cried Skinny, "we have driven off the enemy after terrific slaughter. This land is ours. Sergeant, bring the flag."

I was looking around to find out who was sergeant but when I heard the word, "flag," I knew he meant me. So I stepped forward and stood there.

"Does anybody know what day this is?"

"Saturday," said two or three of the boys at the same time.

"Yes, but what day of the month?"

"June 14," I told him.

"And what is June 14?"

"The anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill," cried Benny.

"No, Benny," Tom said. "That was on the 17th; don't you remember?"

"Flag day," yelled Bill, so loud that I could see my mother come to the back door of our house and look up, as if wondering what was going on.

"You bet it's flag day and the President told us to celebrate it. That's why I wanted to discover this country to-day instead of going fishing."

"They had all kinds of flags," he went on, "at the start of the Revolution. I read it in a book. Every man who raised a regiment had a flag of his own. Some had rattlesnake flags, like we made once, with the words, 'Don't tread on me.'"

"Hurrah!" yelled Bill. "That's the stuff. Betcher life, they hadn't better tread on the Band, either."

"In 1776 Washington had a flag with thirteen red and white stripes and the British union jack in the corner instead of stars. Then in 1777, June 14—this is the day—Congress said what the flag should be, thirteen red and white stripes for the thirteen states and thirteen stars for the union. Since then we have added a star for every new state until there ain't room for many more."

Raven Patrol thinks that some day when he has grown up Skinny will be a great orator and, maybe, president of the United States. It made us feel proud as he stood there, speaking and pointing to the flag.

When he had finished, he took off his hat and we all did the same. Then he grabbed the flag out of my hand and pushed the stick down into the top of a rotten stump on the highest part of the hill. It stood up straight and fine, and as the stripes floated out in the breeze we gathered around and cheered.

Then Skinny held up one hand for us to be quiet.

"Fellers," said he, "we have discovered a new land, which we'll call Bob's Hill, and now we take pos——"

"Stop!" cried a loud voice back of us. "Hold up your hands."

We looked around, scared and surprised. There stood "The Silent Three," with black masks on their faces, black gloves on their hands and pointing revolvers.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUMMER STREET GANG

MAYBE you never stood on a hill, with your legs trembling and your heart thumping, while the Black Hand were pointing revolvers at you which looked as big as barrels. If you never did, you don't know how we felt or what you would have done in our place.

We were so scared at first that we backed a little way down the slippery hillside, they following after, before they could stop us. Then we braced ourselves and stood there with our hands above our heads.

I looked at Skinny, he being captain and patrol leader, and he looked at Tom, who 'most always knows what to do. Skinny was wetting his lips with his tongue and swallowing hard, like he always does when he is scared, and even Tom was frightened. It was easy to see that.

Just then I saw the muscles set in Tom's face, as they did that time when he started over the cliff on Greylock after Benny. He whispered something which made Skinny stare at him with wide-open eyes; then he turned to Bill, who stood on the other side, and whispered to him.

"Great snakes!" I heard Bill say under his breath, "I wish I hadn't come."

I was just wondering what it was Tom had told him, when one of the men spoke in a gruff voice.

"We'll teach you bandits to let our hill alone and not to take possession of any new lands around here. You might as well look down at your homes for the last time; you may never see them again."

We didn't do it, though; we were too much surprised at what Tom was doing. As he stood there, braced, with his arms held above his head, he began to motion with his hands for somebody to go back, trying to do it so the men wouldn't notice. I looked to see who was coming over the hill and there wasn't anybody.

"He's gone crazy," I thought, and my heart

sank, for we were depending on Tom to get us out of the scrape.

Then the men caught him doing it and turned their heads to see who was back of them. It was only for a second but in that second Tom, Skinny, and Bill sprang for their legs, like sliding for home base, with two men out and two strikes.

In another second "The Silent Three," silent no longer, were sprawling on the slippery hillside and while they struggled to get their footing again the Band jumped, rolled, and tumbled to the bottom of the hill and down through the orchard, expecting every second the shooting would begin.

Bill gave one horrible yell as we started. After that nobody said anything until, without waiting to go down Blackinton's driveway, we jumped over the wall, into our garden and crashed through the back door into our house. Once inside, we felt safe and began to breathe again and to cool our faces at the kitchen faucet.

We all felt pretty chesty about getting away from the Black Hand, but, after all, it wasn't much to do. It isn't easy to stand on the steep slope, the grass

being very slippery, even when three husky boys are not diving at your legs. But it was a great deal, it seemed to me, to think of doing it and to dare to do it, and I told Tom so.

"It wasn't much," he said. "We had to do something and that was the only thing I could think of. I was afraid they wouldn't turn around to look. If they hadn't, I don't know where we'd be now."

"Great snakes!" cried Bill. "They will not forget us soon. Didn't I tell you they'd better not tread on the Band?"

"Betcher life!" said Skinny. "Say, did you see me grab that big feller? He was the biggest one of the lot; he was as big as your father, Pedro. There wasn't anything to it after I'd got hold of him. It was lucky for them that I didn't have my rope. I could have lassoed the whole bunch and taken them to jail. You never ought to go out without a rope."

"Where is pa?" I asked, when my mother came hurrying in to see what had broken loose in the kitchen.

"I don't know," said she. "The marshal came in about half an hour ago and he and Mr. Phillips

and your father went off somewhere together. I can't imagine what on earth they are up to. They wore black gloves and seemed very much pleased about something."

When she said that we saw it all in a minute. The marshal and my father had been playing a joke on us. Tom gave a sheepish grin and looked at Skinny; then at Bill.

"I guess we'd better hurry home, fellers," said Skinny. "It's most dinner time."

"If I wasn't afraid it would spoil your dinner," said mother, as they were leaving, "I'd give each of you a doughnut."

"Guess what, Mrs. Smith," Benny told her. "Your doughnuts couldn't spoil anybody's dinner. They always taste like more."

When the boys went away I noticed that Benny had two. Father came in to dinner soon afterward and was smiling to himself all through the meal but he wouldn't say where he had been or what he was laughing at. Anyhow, that was the last we ever heard from the Black Hand and we never found any more messages from "The Silent Three."

"The next thing on the program," said Skinny, when the Band had come together again about four o'clock, "is to go swimming. Shall we go up to the cave and duck under Peck's Falls, or shall we go up to the Basin? We'll leave it to Tom."

"The Basin for swimming, every time," he said.

The boys wanted the scribe to draw a picture of the Basin and if I was better on the draw I'd do it. But after all, no matter how good it is, a picture isn't water, so clear that the tiniest pebble can be seen on the bottom of the pool and little trout swimming around; it isn't the music of Tophet brook, as it tumbles over the ledge into the Big Basin and then spills out at one end between rocks into the Little Basin below; it isn't the cool shadows of the ravine in summer time, where sunshine never strikes except when the sun is right overhead; or ferns and vines growing on the rocks and waving in the breeze; it isn't the boys you know best and like best, jumping and splashing and diving and having the time of their lives, with no school to bother and the garden all hoed and the woodbox filled; it isn't anything, only just a picture.

Say, give the Band the real thing; that's all. We'll do the rest. And we did, for when Skinny said swimming, holding up two fingers, it didn't take us long to start.

We live, as I have said, in a narrow valley, lying between Greylock range of mountains on the west and the Hoosac range on the east. Leading up to each range—that is, the woodsy part—are hills, which almost come together at the bottom. They are so near together that the houses of our village have begun to climb up on each side and only Park Street, and maybe one or two others, are on level ground.

When you go up to the Basin from Park Street, you first have to cross the mill race and the river, which is not deep enough to swim in except near some dam. Then go on up past Summer Street but you'd better be careful that the Summer Street Gang doesn't get you. Beyond are pastures on the hillside and after a while you come to a sort of woods, with nothing anywhere around that looks like water or swimming.

But if you know the way, and you'd better believe

the Band does, you edge and straddle around a certain tree and rock, careful not to fall for it is a long way down to the bottom, and find yourself in a narrow, steep path, along the side of a ravine. It isn't an easy path to walk in because it goes down fast and there are rocks to climb around, but you soon get to the bottom.

Tophet brook comes down from the mountainside through this gulch. It must have been a big stream once and it is now in the spring time. Mr. Norton says that the great gash in the hill was cut away by the water. That was long ages ago, before there were any boys to go swimming. The path comes out on a rocky floor, sloping gently up to the brim of the Big Basin, which is a deep pool of clear water.

Into this basin-like pool water pours from another rocky floor, four or five feet higher, which slopes down and is slippery, with several inches of water flowing over it and moss growing here and there. On each side, the rocky walls of the gulch go up almost straight, maybe a hundred feet, or more.

The Basin is too small to do much swimming in,

like you can in big rivers and lakes, but it is great for diving and jumping. We were having all kinds of fun, splashing around, with nobody there but ourselves except some little fellows in the Little Basin, who didn't count. Skinny was standing on the slippery rock above the Big Basin, ready to jump.

"Watch me, fellers," he yelled. "Watch the human fish in his great diving act, called 'now you see him and now you don't.'"

We all looked while he put his hands up over his head and made ready to dive head first into the pool below. Then, as he stood there, poised, all of a sudden a stone from somewhere above struck in the shallow water beside him; then, another, and another.

Skinny tried to stop himself and look to see who was doing it but his feet slipped out from under him and down he went, kerflop, five feet into the pool. He struck the water on his back, kicking with his legs and hitting out with his hands, looking too funny for anything and so mad he could only sputter. As he went under with a big splash and

gurgles we heard a shout from the top of the ravine above.

“Chaw, chaw raw beef! Chaw, chaw raw beef!”

We knew what that meant. The Summer Street Gang had slipped down the path when we were not looking and tied knots in our shirts. It would take a lot of chewing with our teeth to get the knots loose if they had done the job well.

“We’ll raw beef you when we catch you,” yelled Skinny, as soon as he could get the water out of his mouth.

We made a rush for the bushes, behind which we had left our clothes. They certainly had done a good job, wetting the sleeves and pulling the knots so tight that we knew it would take half an hour or more to get them loose.

“Benny,” said Tom, “watch our clothes, that’s a good fellow. We are going after that Gang, shirts or no shirts. Come on, boys.”

“And when we catch them,” added Bill, “it is going to be our busy day.”

We slipped into our trousers as quickly as we could and started up the path on a run. It wasn’t

any use; when we had come out on top there was no one in sight.

“Chaw, chaw raw beef! Chaw, chaw raw beef!” came floating through the air again from far away toward Summer Street.

“We can’t go down there without shirts on,” said Skinny, “and if we did they would hide in some house. They dassn’t stand up and fight. But we’ll lay for them and what we’ll do when we catch them will be a-plenty. Believe me!”

“Guess what,” said Benny, when we had climbed down to the Basin again. “We might as well go swimming some more. I’ve put the shirts up in the sun. Maybe it will be easier to untie the knots when they are dry. Besides, I want to see the human fish again in his great diving act.”

It was almost supper time when the knots were untied and we were ready for home; but we didn’t take the shortest cut. We marched down Summer Street from one end to the other, looking for the Gang and yelling for them to come out and meet us halfway.

“Anyhow,” said Hank, at last, when we had

made up our minds that we might as well go home, "we did it to them once and they were only getting even."

Just the same, we didn't like it. It makes a difference somehow whether you do a thing yourself or the other fellow does it.

Skinny stopped at our house Sunday afternoon, looking so dressed up I hardly knew him. It was easy to see that there was something on his mind. As soon as he had a chance he motioned for me to come out into the yard, and we sat down on the woodpile in the shade of the barn.

"Pedro," said he, "I saw Dick Elmore at Sunday school to-day."

Dick is leader of the Summer Street Gang and one of the guys who tied our shirts.

"Did you lick him?" I asked.

"How could I in Sunday school, with the teacher looking?"

"What did you do?"

"Didn't do anything but when he was going out he handed me this card and hurried on before I could hit him."

I read the card and what it said almost took my breath away:

“We want you Bob’s Hill boys to keep away from our Basin. It’s on our side of town. We’re keeping away from your cave. You keep away from the Basin, or we’ll make you.”

“You bet they keep away from the cave,” I told him, “and they will keep on doing it if they know when they are well off.”

We wouldn’t let them come fooling around our cave, of course. We discovered the cave and we fixed it up inside. That made it belong to us. But it was different with the Basin. We discovered that as much as they did and had been swimming there as long as we could remember. Besides, you have to go swimming in summer time but you don’t have to have a cave, although it is fun.

“Pedro,” said Skinny, solemn-like, “think of something, can’t you? We’ve got to do something. There ain’t enough water at Peck’s Falls to swim in. You can duck and all that but you can’t swim.”

“We could swim in the race,” I told him. “We do sometimes, anyhow.”



I READ THE CARD AND WHAT IT SAID ALMOST TOOK MY
BREATH AWAY

“There isn’t any good place to dive and the water isn’t so clean and nice.”

“It looks like that, or fight, and there are a lot of them.”

Skinny hauled off and gave a few undercuts in the air. It was fierce.

“That would fix ’em,” said he, “but first we ought to have a meetin’. Mr. Norton doesn’t like to have us fight. I’ll draw the Sign on the bridge on the way home, calling a meetin’ at the cave right after school to-morrow.”

CHAPTER V

A FIGHT AT THE BASIN

IT was the last week of school and we didn't feel much like studying or sitting still in a hot room. School is all right in winter time, when you don't want to go hopping on bobs, and on rainy days; but when summer comes, every waving branch seems to beckon us out to play; old Greylock looks down on us through a break in the hills sort of pitying-like, as if he hated to have us kept in a stuffy room; and by shutting our eyes we can see the cool shadows chasing over the Basin and seem to hear the roaring laugh of Peck's Falls.

Say, the last week of school isn't easy. I guess Teacher thought so, too, for she looked tired, even if it was Monday, and twice I caught her gazing out of the window at the mountain.

We saw the other boys at recess and told them about the meeting, for fear they might not see the

Sign in time. When school was out we made a bee-line for the cave, without stopping to go home first. Tom wasn't with us; he had commenced work that morning.

"Has anybody thought of anything?" asked Skinny, after the meeting had been called to order. "Let's hear from Bill—I mean the gentleman from Pleasant Street."

"Sk—Mr. Chairman," said Bill, getting up so suddenly that he nearly bumped his head, "it's too hot for a meetin'. Let's go swimmin'——"

We all stopped him with a yell, for everybody felt the same. Some of the boys started to unbutton their clothes. Bill waved his hand and we waited to listen.

"I was saying, let's go swimmin', *up to the Basin.*"

When Bill said that we all were quiet for a few seconds; then as it came over us what he meant, we burst into a roar and started to scramble out of the cave.

"Order! Order!" yelled Skinny, pounding with his hatchet until he was red in the face. "The

meetin' will come to order. Come on back, you fellers; it ain't business."

He finally made us hear and we gathered around once more. Being scribe, I nudged Harry.

"I move that we adjourn," he shouted.

"All in favor of 'journin' and swimmin'—*at the Basin*——" Skinny began but if he finished nobody heard.

"Aye, aye, aye," we yelled, and in another minute were climbing the side of the ravine on the way to the Basin. Fifteen minutes later we charged across Summer Street, keeping our eyes open for the enemy, and up through the hillside pasture, half expecting the Summer Street Gang to jump out at us every minute and bar the way.

At the top of the path which leads down into the ravine we stopped to decide what to do. It would be ticklish business going down that path single file, if the gang were at the bottom.

We listened a minute and couldn't hear a sound except some birds in the bushes. Motioning for us to wait, Bill slid carefully around the tree into the path and made his way slowly down without any

noise. We knew that from one place about half-way down the Basin would be in plain sight.

He was gone so long that we were just about to start down after him to see what had happened, when we heard him call.

"Come on in," he yelled. "The water's fine."

We found him splashing around in the Big Basin and it didn't take us long to join him but we were careful to leave our clothes on the rocks in plain sight. We didn't want any more knots tied in them.

There wasn't anybody at either Basin except us and we played around until most supper time, feeling cool and fine when we came out.

"Wait a minute, fellers," said Skinny, when we were ready to go.

He went up to the wall of the cliff and began to write upon the stone with a piece of colored chalk.

The others stood around, looking over his shoulder. This is what he wrote:

"To the Summer Street Gang:

The water is fine.

Gory Gabe,
And his Band."

Then we started for home. When we crossed Summer Street we kept a sharp lookout but most of us were more worried about what might happen at home than about any gang. Our folks don't like to have us go anywhere after school at night without going home first.

"What is the matter with all of you coming around by my house?" said Bill. "They won't say much to me if you are there."

That was the last time we went swimming until after school had closed for the summer vacation. It doesn't matter why. As Skinny says, "You don't need to put in everything."

But the very first day of vacation we started for the Basin. It seemed as if we couldn't stand it another minute without jumping into the water. Mother said that I might put a washtub out in the barn and jump there all I wanted to; but where is the fun in that?

"Now, fellers," warned Skinny, "we must keep together. If one of us goes up to the Basin alone there will be trouble. We ain't looking for a fight, of course. We promised Mr. Norton that we

wouldn't do any fighting except in self-defense. But we've got a right to go swimmin' as long as our folks say we can and if anybody or any gang happens to jump on us there is going to be some lively self-defense; believe me."

"Leave it to us," growled Bill, feeling of his muscle.

The rest of us didn't say much but I could see some of the boys double up their fists and Benny Wade slashed around in the air in great shape.

It made a funny feeling chase up and down inside of us when we went through the bars leading into the pasture, not knowing what might happen and afraid that maybe we'd have to do the self-defense act. There wasn't anybody in sight and we began to think that everything was going to be all right but when we were halfway to the path we heard a great noise back of us, and out from behind some bushes where they had been hiding came the Gang, between us and Summer Street. There were more of them than there were of us. -

We wheeled when they yelled; then stood there facing them, with a sort of sinking feeling in our

hearts, for no matter how hard you may try you can't lick all creation. If Tom had been there I'd have felt different. Tom is a whirlwind when it comes to self-defense, as you know if you have read about our battle with the Gingham Ground Gang on Bob's Hill, before we were friends.

They came toward us until they were about twenty feet away; then stopped and Dick Elmore stepped out in front of the others.

"Now we've got you where we want you," he said. "Maybe Gory Gabe had better write a letter to his folks before we start in. After we get through they won't know him."

It made Skinny mad and I don't blame him. "There are only eight of us," said he, "and a dozen or more of you. That shows what a lot of cowards you are. You dassn't take a crowd of your size."

"You'll see what kind of cowards we are in about two minutes."

"I'll dare you to come halfway," Skinny told him. "It will only take me a minute and a half to write a letter on your face."

We all laughed at that and Skinny stepped forward halfway, with his fists doubled. Dick didn't move except to look around at his gang and beckon them up closer.

When he saw that, Bill let out an awful yell and jumped into the air, knocking his heels together twice before he struck ground again.

"Come on!" he shouted. "What are you afraid of? I can lick any two fellows in the gang. Pick 'em out."

His yell almost scared them for a second, until they saw what it was; then they came for us—not two but all of them.

"Charge!" yelled Skinny. He started to say something about Bunker Hill but there wasn't time.

We charged all right. There wasn't anything else to do. It was great to see Skinny and Bill then, only we didn't have time to look; it was our busy day. We knew that our only chance was to break through the line and get to Summer Street, and break through we did after some hard fighting. Once through, we turned and faced them but kept

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moving backward toward home and wishing that we were there.

They didn't jump on us again but followed after as we backed out of the pasture, asking how we liked it and telling us to come on in, the water was fine, and things like that.

At last we came to the street where we felt sort of safe near the houses. Skinny was just telling them that next time we'd have enough of the Gingham Ground Gang with us to make things even and that what we'd do to them then would be a-plenty, when who should come along but Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster.

It made us glad and it made us sorry and kind of ashamed; glad because we knew that would stop the fight, and ashamed because he had caught us fighting. He looked at us a minute without speaking, sort of sad-like and yet with a half smile on his face, as if he was thinking of things that happened when he was a boy.

"What is the trouble, Captain?" he asked, finally. "Your company seems to be beating an honorable retreat."

"It was self-defense, just the same," began Skinny. "When a dozen fellers jump on to eight you have to fight or take a licking."

"I am surprised at you, Dick Elmore. It seems to be necessary for boys to fight once in a while. Anyhow, I shouldn't like to do anything that would take the fight out of a boy. He will need it all, and then some, as he goes through life. But it doesn't seem exactly square for a dozen chaps to pitch on to eight, and I always have found you square before. How is it? Are you afraid of these Bob's Hill boys?"

"No, sir," said Dick, "but they are good fighters and we thought that we'd do the job up for keeps while we were about it."

"What seems to be the trouble?"

"We told them to keep away from the Basin."

"O ho! Sits the wind in that quarter?"

"What did you say?"

"I say this. Let's get this fighting business out of our systems. In olden times the leaders of two opposing armies often would fight it out between themselves, while the others looked on. It was a

pretty good way and saved a whole lot of trouble. Now, Skinny, you and Dick get busy. I want to see how you do it."

"Aw, I don't want to," Skinny told him. "A feller can't fight with everybody looking at him."

"Well, as Dick seems to feel the same about it, I suppose that we'll have to find some other way to settle the row. How will this do? I have been watching you Summer Street boys a long time, thinking what fine material you would make for Boy Scouts. There are two patrols already in my troop, these Bob's Hill boys and some chaps from the Gingham Ground, and we need another. Dick, suppose that you pick out eight of your fellows and we'll form a new patrol; two of them, if you can get hold of sixteen. I've had a promise of uniforms for one more patrol. How fortunate that we all happened along at this time! It will enable us to get through with the preliminaries early in your vacation; then we can go out on a long hike together. What do you say?"

"How about it, fellers?" whispered Skinny,

while the Summer Street boys were talking it over among themselves. "I feel kind of mad yet; and how about the Basin?"

"Forget it," I told him. "Mr. Norton knows what he is about."

"There are eight of us, Mr. Norton, who want to do it," called Dick just then.

"That is good. Can you meet at my house to-morrow evening, at half-past seven o'clock, to talk it over and name your officers? I think the neighbors might be persuaded to send in some ice cream, enough for the Ravens, too, if they will come. You will understand, of course, that Mrs. Norton would not like to have her furniture broken. If you should get to fighting you might mar the piano."

"Guess what," said Benny, "you can't fight and eat ice cream at the same time."

"That is a good thought, Benny, worth remembering as you go through life. We'll risk it, anyhow, and let me say that while you Ravens are a pretty husky bunch you will have to go some when our new patrol gets started."

He turned down the street again; then thought of something more.

“By the way,” he asked, “how about the Basin? It seems a pity to keep anybody away this hot weather, with vacation just starting. I might like to take a swim, myself. Why can’t you chaps make a treaty of peace, the Ravens to go swimming certain days of the week, or maybe it would be better for them to go mornings and the Summer Street boys, afternoons?”

“Aw, they can go any old time,” Dick told him. “We don’t care; do we, boys?”

“You were right, Benny,” said Mr. Norton, smiling to himself as we walked down the street with him. “One can’t fight and eat ice cream at the same time. Remember that always; it may save you a lot of trouble.”

CHAPTER VI

TIGER PATROL

MY father says that the days are too short and that even the years roll around so fast that it makes his head swim. No sooner does he start kicking about how hot it is than his teeth begin to chatter with the cold and he has to change his tune.

The Band doesn't think so; it doesn't seem that way to us. Some days are so long that they are like a month of Sundays. It is worst when we are waiting to do something or go somewhere, like Fourth of July or going up to Mr. Norton's; most of all, to do what we decided after we went up there. But I can't put that in here because it didn't happen until later.

"A person would think you never had been up to Mr. Norton's before and never would get a chance to go again," mother told me, when I asked for the fourth time if it was too early to go.

"I don't know how the man does it," she went on. "You boys are never nearly so crazy to come here and I give away half my doughnuts 'most every Saturday but I'd rather have you with him than anywhere else I know. I'll say this much, you are a better boy and a good deal more of a man since you joined the Boy Scouts."

"We are going to have a new patrol," I told her. "Eight of the Summer Street Gang are coming in."

"What! That crowd of young ruffians who pick on you so much?"

"I guess the picking isn't all on one side," laughed father, looking up from his paper. "Take it from me who knows, the Ravens are able to take care of themselves and even to start things on occasions. If there is any 'picking' going on, they will do their share."

"Well, it doesn't look good to me to see our only child come home from Summer Street with a black eye and all scratched up."

"Mr. Norton is going to have ice cream," I said, trying to change the subject, "and Jim Donovan of the Eagles is going to be there."

"Now," said Mr. Norton, an hour later, after we had scraped our dishes clean, "let us talk over this Scout business. The Ravens will tell you all of the details and what fun it is to be a Scout, from time to time as you meet and play together, but we can talk it over here in a general way.

"First of all, I want to say that scouting in America is not a military movement, as some good people seem to think, unless it is militarism to make a boy strong and brave. We are not trying to make soldiers out of the boys or to train up fighters. We wish to make men out of them—strong men, physically and morally—who will be able to defend their homes and their country, if need be, and to take care of themselves at all times."

Bill opened his mouth to yell at that but I hit him in the back just in time.

"You boys are more fortunate than city boys, to my way of thinking. You roam the hills and woods, as free as the Indians were, themselves, or nearly so. You live out of doors, adding to your strength daily and unconsciously drinking in the beauty and

the wonder of it all, and you learn naturally much that the Boy Scout movement teaches."

"That's so," put in Skinny. "When we joined the Scouts it wasn't much different from what we had been doing, when we played bandit and Injun, only more so."

"Of course, there is a great deal for you village boys to learn but think of the city chaps who have to go miles to get away from houses and pavements and police, into the woods and fields. If they did half the things you do every day of your lives, they would be arrested. What you do isn't bad, or out of place, because nobody is annoyed by it but it wouldn't be tolerated in a city. That kind of life is what we call artificial; that is, unnatural. Something should be done to bring into boys' lives, and girls', too, conditions which have been taken away by city life and which are needed to make strong, rugged, self-reliant, resourceful men and women,—true to themselves, true to their country, and true to God.

"A boy ought to be able to take care of himself wherever you put him. If dropped in the midst of

a trackless wilderness he should be able to make his way out, to find food and water, to cook his food properly, to produce fire by friction if there is no other way, to know trees and birds and something of the great and beautiful world he lives in. All that is needed is to direct the boy's energies; he will do the rest and have the time of his life doing it. So we have the Boy Scouts of America, not scouts in a military sense but in a pioneer sense, as a foundation on which can be built a better citizenship, a sturdier race, a truer manhood, a nobler character. Then, when you boys have grown up, you can do what I am trying to do, help along the boys who will come after you—partly because you love them and partly because you owe it to God.

“We are all passing through the world—just passing through, that is all. We want to have a lot of fun while going through, of course, and when you boys have grown up you will want to be able to earn a reasonable amount of money; but, listen—the man who passes through without leaving the world a little better than he found it is a failure, and the more money such a man succeeds in accumu-

lating, the greater his failure, because his lost opportunities for making the world better have been greater.

"Now, I have made more of a speech than I intended and if you boys feel the need of refreshment you will find a jar of lemonade over in that corner. Then let us get down to business."

"Pedro, you put what our Scoutmaster said in the minutes of the meetin', so everybody can read it," said Skinny between swallows.

After we had tried the lemonade, the Summer Street boys told us that they had chosen Dick Elmore for their patrol leader.

"He will make a good one," said Mr. Norton. "You also will need an assistant patrol leader and a scribe. This will be a good time to choose them."

After some talk the Summer Street boys decided to have Frank Barker for assistant patrol leader and Jerry Upton for scribe.

"Fine!" exclaimed our Scoutmaster. "How about your patrol animal?"

"What is that?"

"Every patrol chooses an animal to be known by, and the call of that animal becomes the call of the patrol. The Bob's Hill boys chose the raven because there are so many crows beyond the hill, up toward Greylock."

"Everybody caw!" shouted Skinny.

"We might choose the squirrel," said Dick, when it was still again. "There are a lot of squirrels in the woods up by the Basin, but how could we bark like one?"

"Guess what," put in Benny. "I can't bark like a squirrel but I know how to catch 'em. Climb a tree and make a noise like a nut."

"That would be easy for you," Dick told him.

"I'll tell you what," said Skinny. "There are bears over on the Summer Street side of town. I lassoed one once, coming down East Mountain, that time we did our First Class Scout stunt. Climbed a tree and dropped the lasso over his head as slick as grease. Didn't I, fellers? Say, it surprised him some. Why not take a bear for your patrol animal? You could growl like a bear."

There was a lot of growling for a minute, until

Mr. Norton put his hands over his ears and began to call for help.

"The patrol leader of the Ravens seems to have made a good suggestion," said he, "although some of us have heard before about that cub which chased him up a tree. What do you say, Dick?"

"I say that we'd rather call ourselves Tigers," said he, looking hard at Skinny. "They don't lasso tigers; it wouldn't be safe."

"Shucks!" Skinny began. "Tigers! Betcher life I——"

"Fellows," said Mr. Norton, hurriedly, winking at Benny, "the ice cream is all gone but there is plenty of lemonade left. Have some on me."

When we had finished drinking Mr. Norton gathered the Tigers around him.

"It is customary," he said, "for each of our patrols to choose a secret password. The Ravens have such a password. In all the world nobody knows that word except the members of Raven Patrol and myself and nobody ever can know it unless one of us betrays the secret. Nobody possibly can find out what that word is. It is not written

down anywhere. It is not even in the dictionary.

"We first took a motto suggested by one of the Scout laws; then by using the first letters, or perhaps it was the last letters, of the words in that motto, we formed a new word that never had been formed before. That new word is the patrol password.

"Now, you Tigers come with me into the next room while we choose a word. Even the Ravens must not know this."

They went out and pretty soon we heard a great noise of laughing and shouting.

"Gee!" said Skinny. "That must be a word and a half. But they will have to go some to beat ours."

"Ours, too," said Jim. "I 'most gave ours away in my sleep one night."

I can't tell what the Tigers' word was because I don't know. When they had come back into the room Mr. Norton called Jim Donovan to him.

"Jim," said he, "you are here to-night as patrol leader of Eagle Patrol. You Eagles are working for First Class Scout badges and one of the things

we require you to do is for each to train another lad to be a Scout. Here is your chance to make good. These Tigers must be trained. They must be able to repeat and explain the twelve Scout laws; and know the Scout sign, salute and meaning of the badge; they must be able to tie any four of eight or ten knots when called upon; they must know the composition and history of the national flag, and they must learn and receive the Scout oath. I am going to assign the boys of this new patrol to the Eagles. Let each Eagle take one of the boys in hand and teach him these things as soon as possible. Bring him back here a trained Tenderfoot one week from to-night. Can you do it in that short time?"

"I'll see the boys to-morrow," Jim told him, "and we'll get busy right away."

We were thinking that maybe it was time to go home when Mr. Norton held up one hand for us to be quiet.

"There is another little matter which I'd like to bring before the meeting," said he, "and see what you will think of it. I find that it is necessary for me to go to Boston pretty soon on business. After

that I shall be free for a couple of weeks, and I really need a vacation. There is no better place to spend a vacation than in and around Boston."

"Gee, Mr. Norton," said Skinny, "take us with you, can't you? Take us down to Bunker Hill, where they watched for the whites of the enemy's eyes."

"That is just what I was going to speak about. We have our tents and camping outfits and we have learned how to camp to the best advantage, so that an outing of that kind need not cost a great deal of money. There will be good fun in it for those who can go and a great deal to learn. There are more history and inspiration to the square foot in Boston than any other place I know. This is pretty short notice and probably all of you will not be able to go; your folks will have other plans; but we ought to be able to get together a dozen fellows from our three patrols. How about celebrating Fourth of July, Skinny, in the shadow of Bunker Hill monument?"

"Gee-whillikins!" That was all Skinny could say but we knew what he meant.

"Find out who can go as soon as you can. We ought to be in marching order within ten days, if we wish to get settled before the Fourth."

"Are we going to hike?" Benny asked.

"I think not; it is too far. We could do it, in easy stages, but it would take too long. It will be more profitable and more fun to spend the time in and around Boston and at the shore. On the way back, if we feel like it, we can get off at Hoosac Tunnel station and climb over the mountain to North Adams, like we did before."

"Can we go fishing in the ocean?" asked Bill.

"Surely we can. Why not? We'll go out after cod. Didn't Benny tell us once that the saltiness of the ocean is due to the presence of so many cod-fish? There will not be so many when we come away."

"We all slapped Benny on the back at that; then, laughing and shouting, started for home.

"There is some sense to that plan," said father, when I told him what we wanted to do. "I didn't quite like the idea of your going so far from home when you went to Indiana and Illinois, although it

turned out all right. You can go; that is, if your mother is willing. What you will learn there will be worth more to the country and to you than a whole term in the schoolroom. What this Nation needs is a little old-fashioned patriotism. It is a good thing to begin with the boys, and Boston is a good place to start."

"Skinny is strong on patriotism," I told him.

"You are right," he said. "I wish we had more like him. With Mr. Norton and Skinny along the country will be safe but they'd better nail the town down."

That made it right for me but I didn't know about the other boys until Sunday afternoon, when some of them dropped in to sit on the woodpile and talk things over.

"I can go, Pedro," called Skinny, as he came into the yard.

"So can I," said Bill, who was with him.

"That makes three, anyhow," I told them. "The folks will let me go. How about the others?"

"There is Benny now, over in his yard." Bill whistled as low as he could and made Benny hear, it

being Sunday. He came tearing across the street on a jump.

"Can you go, fellers? I can," he called, before he was inside the gate.

"That is four," said Skinny. "Gee, I hope the rest can go. We'll make Boston sit up and take notice."

Hank saw us a little later, as he was coming down the street.

"They said I could go," he told us, "if I'd be as easy on spending money as I could. I've got 'most enough saved, anyhow. I saw Dick Elmore on the way down. He is going and maybe Frank Barker, his assistant patrol leader, will go."

"Seven. I tried to get Tom Chapin to go. He said he couldn't but that maybe he'd come over for a week end while we were there."

"How about the Eagles?" I asked. "Has anybody heard from them?"

Nobody knew, so we walked down to the Gingham Ground to find out. Being Boy Scouts makes a difference. At one time we shouldn't have dared walk down there with our best clothes on because

there would have been something doing when the Gang saw us.

Jim came running down the street to meet us. "I can go," he shouted, "but I am the only one. It will cost too much for the others."

"Sure, Jimmy is going," said Mrs. Donavan. "If I wur-ruk the flesh off my bones he's going. The lad has had some schooling, thanks to you bys, and he can lairn more in wan minnit with Mr. Narton than he could at home in a yair."

After that the days went slowly enough, although there was plenty to do to get ready. We tried to think up some scheme to make money so that we could take more of the Eagles along but there wasn't time. It takes time to make money.

"If only we could find some more buried treasure up in the Bellows Pipe," mourned Skinny one day.

"Or a gold mine on Greylock," added Hank. "I have been thinking of that a long time. I'll bet gold is up there, if we only knew where to look. There 'most always is gold in mountains."

"Let's look for some."

CHAPTER VII

HUNTING FOR GOLD

THE scribe dreamed that night of finding enough gold to make the Ravens rich. It lay there on the mountainside, shining in the sun, so bright that we had to shut our eyes, but we never could take hold of it. Something would stop us every time. I could hear Skinny calling, as if from a long way off, telling me to get busy. Then I reached out toward the gold again, while Skinny's voice kept getting louder and louder, until finally I opened my eyes; and there wasn't any gold at all, only my room at home, with me lying in bed.

It was broad daylight but the sun was still behind East Mountain and nobody was stirring in the house. As I lay there, trying to sleep again, I still could hear Skinny's voice, as in my dream.

I couldn't understand it until I heard the caw of a crow under my window; then I jumped up and

looked out. In the driveway between our house and Phillips's were Skinny, Bill, and Hank, each with a tin pail.

"Hurry down, Pedro," whispered Skinny, when he saw me at the window. "Hank has found a good divining rod and we want to try it before folks get around."

I nodded but didn't speak for fear of waking somebody and in a few minutes joined them in front of the house.

"I thought the meeting was at nine o'clock," I said. "It isn't five yet."

"The meeting is at nine but we wanted to try it out first. Hank could only find one rod. It's a dandy."

"It doesn't look like much to me."

"You wait and see. It will surprise folks when we show them what we have found. Get a pail, Pedro. We want to bring home all we can of it when we come to breakfast."

Soon we were climbing Bob's Hill, taking the easiest way because we didn't care about going to the highest part. When we rounded the shoulder

of the hill, the village still lay in the shadow but the upper part of Greylock was all lighted up with sunshine.

When we reached the west road we started up the mountain. It was great to be out that time of morning. The air was cool; the crows were calling, and we could hear the roaring of Peck's Falls over in the woods. It made us want to see our cave.

"We can see it later," Skinny told us. "We'll have to hide the gold there, anyhow, except what we take home in the pails."

"Where do we start in, Hank?" asked Bill, when we had passed the woods.

"I don't know; the book didn't say. I guess it won't make any difference as long as we begin somewhere. This looks like a good place."

We left the road as he spoke, turning into a sort of clearing on the mountainside.

"Did anybody bring the witch-hazel?" asked Hank.

Skinny handed him a bottle and he smeared the stick all over with it.

"Now, I'll show you how to do it. You hold my pail, Pedro."

He took one fork of the rod in each hand and held it out over the ground as he walked. Then we tramped back and forth over the clearing, watching the rod every minute to see where it would point.

"Don't you feel it pull any, Hank?" asked Skinny, anxiously, after we had done it a long time and were getting tired.

"A little, once or twice; sort of a nibble but not enough to tell for sure."

"Hunting for gold is hard work," grumbled Bill. "I don't believe Hank's rod is any good. A granddaddy-long-legs would be better. They will point toward water every time, and maybe toward gold."

We went at it again, just the same, but the thing wouldn't point and we were getting hungrier every minute. Finally, Hank dropped his arms to his sides to rest them.

"Look!" I shouted, when I saw where the rod was pointing.

"Is it gold?" asked the others, crowding around.

"No; something better. You can't eat gold."

They looked where the rod and I both pointed. What they saw was a big patch of wild strawberries, which I'll leave it to anybody who ever ate any, are away ahead of gold, when they are ripe and you are hungry. In a minute we were on our knees, picking and eating for all we were worth.

"I'll tell you what, fellers," said Skinny, after a while. "It's 'most breakfast time. Let's hide the divining rod until after we have had the meetin' and carry home a lot of berries to the folks. Then they won't ask us what we have been doing. And, remember, mum's the word."

The folks were wondering what had become of me, when at last I reached home; but the minute they caught sight of the berries a shout went up and mother grabbed the pail.

"You are a dear child," she said, "to get up so early and pick strawberries for our breakfast and, you poor boy, you are all hot and tired. Lie down on the couch until I get the berries hulled. I'll call you when breakfast is ready."

Say, Skinny has a great head!

At nine o'clock the Ravens met at the cave, as

we had planned to do the day before. We told the other boys about looking for gold in the morning early and not finding anything but strawberries.

"This time," said Hank, "we'll go south on the mountain."

"And we'll find gold, too," added Bill. "I 'most know we will."

It didn't take long to get the rod; then, with Hank holding it as before, we started south from the road, along the mountainside.

"I know what the trouble is," Hank told us, after we had been working an hour or two. "I've been holding the thing too tight; it couldn't point if it wanted to. Now watch while I try again."

In less than five minutes we all gave a shout, for the rod tipped so suddenly and so far that Hank nearly dropped it. Then we stood there, half scared, looking where it was pointing.

"The brook!" exclaimed Skinny. "It is pointing toward water and gold at the same time. That is what made it pull so hard."

The rod pointed toward a little stream that gurgled and sang its way down the mountain toward

a farm which we could see below. We all watched while Skinny pawed around in the gravel. Soon he brought up both hands full of sand and stones, and when the water had drained off we could see little chunks of gold all through it, glistening in the sunshine. You could have hung a hat on his eyes, they stuck out so, and we all were about the same.

"Fellers," he shouted, "we've done it. We've struck gold, and are as rich as old What's-his-name."

It seemed too good to be true but there was the stuff, shining, every time we looked. We hadn't brought anything to dig with or to put the gold in; so, after talking it over, we decided that Benny and I should go back for shovels and pails, we living nearest, while the others watched to see that nobody meddled with our mine.

"Pedro," called Hank, after we had started, "bring some kind of dish that we can use to wash out the gold in, something with flaring sides. I'll show you fellows a thing or two. I've been reading up on gold mining."

It took nearly an hour for us to make the trip. When we came back each had a shovel and a pail

and I had mother's frying pan. That was the only dish I could find with flaring sides, and they didn't flare enough to hurt anybody. That was what kept us so long. I had to wait until there wasn't anybody in the kitchen.

Hank took the frying pan and filled it with sand and gravel from the bed of the stream. He carried this down to where the brook was deeper and held it in the water, just under the surface. The flowing water washed the dirt and sand over the edge. Then he shook and twisted the pan, something like popping corn, and all the time the dirt and sand came to the top and washed over the side.

"You see," he told us, "gold is heavier than dirt and sand. When I shake the pan the gold sinks to the bottom and the dirt washes over the edge."

After he had washed away all that he could we picked out some of the stones that were left; then poured the gold and what dirt didn't wash out into one of the pails.

We took turns doing that and digging, for it was hard work, keeping at it until almost dinner time, and we were beginning to think about going home,

when we saw a man coming up the mountain from the farmhouse below. He was shouting and waving his arms.

We thought at first that he knew about the gold but when he had come nearer we could hear him yelling something about us muddying up his drinking water. He had run a pipe from the brook into his house so that he could have running water in the kitchen.

"Beat it, fellers," said Skinny, "and mum's the word."

Two boys took hold of each pail; two others carried the shovels; Hank grabbed the divining rod, and I, the frying pan. Then we started for the cave.

He didn't follow us, although he kept shouting something and shaking his fists at us until we were out of sight. Once out on the road, we felt safe and took it easier. When we came opposite the falls we turned into the woods, feeling great because we had two pails of gold, but a little anxious about the mine, on account of the farmer.

"Gee-whillikins, fellers," said Skinny, putting



"YOU SEE, GOLD IS HEAVIER THAN DIRT AND SAND"

down his side of a pail. "Gold is awful heavy stuff. Here, Harry, you and Chuck grab hold and let us carry the shovels a while."

He ran on ahead, dodging from tree to tree, until suddenly, with a warning hiss, he dropped flat on the ground. We dropped, too, although we didn't know why. It is always best to play safe.

Pretty soon, as we lay there, we heard a crackling among the trees and bushes and a man came in sight, walking through the woods. When he had passed without seeing us, Skinny arose to his feet, took good aim with his shovel and fired; then dropped to the ground again; wriggled along to the next tree; made a dash for a screen of bushes, and in another moment was out of sight. He was out of hearing, too, for hardly a sound did he make except once or twice the snapping of a stick, until we heard him caw over near the falls.

"Answer, Benny," said Bill, who is assistant patrol leader and doesn't get a chance to work at it much. "You do it best."

"Caw! Caw-caw!" called Benny, sounding almost like a real crow.

We found Skinny out on Pulpit Rock, looking down over the pulpit part to where our cave is.

"The coast is clear, my brave men," said he. "Follow me. Old Long Knife will lead the way."

We crept down the side of the ravine toward the cave and hid behind some bushes, while Skinny went forward and knocked on the rock, like the bandits did in Arabian Nights.

"Open see-zam," said he.

"Is she open, Skinny?" called Bill.

For answer, he beckoned to us. Stepping out in the edge of the stream, we crawled into the cave, those carrying the gold going first and Skinny, last, so that he could shut the cave again.

"The meetin' will come to order," said he, when all were inside. "We must decide what to do, fellers, about getting more gold. If we muddy up the man's water he'll make a fuss about it and stop us, and he'll find out what we are doing."

Each one of us tried to think of some way out of it. Bill was for going up there on the first moonlight night, when the man would be asleep. It was a good plan only we were afraid that our folks

might find it out and stop us. Benny wanted to dig the gold out carefully, trying not to roil the water, and carry the dirt to the cave before washing. He said there was more water at the cave and the washing part would be easier. But we didn't like the idea of carrying the loads of dirt so far.

Skinny thought that it would be easier to start out with the divining rod again and find some more gold, perhaps close to the cave. We decided to do that, if Hank's plan didn't work out. Hank has a great head on him when it comes to making things and doing things.

"I'll tell you what," he began, after everybody else had said something. "Don't you remember, the place where we found the gold was at a bend in the brook? Let's cut a ditch straight across so that the water needn't go around the bend at all."

"How will we wash out the gold?" I asked.

"That's so; I hadn't thought of that part. Wait, I have it. We can make a part of the brook go another way and over a little dam, enough to wash the dirt out."

It seemed a good way to do. Building the dam would be fun, anyhow, whether the plan worked or not.

That having been settled, we started for home but first I put some of the gold in a little bottle, which we used to keep matches in so that they wouldn't get damp, and put it in my pocket. I wanted to see it sparkle and think of all the things we'd do with the money.

"Mum's the word, fellers," said Skinny, the last thing before we began to scatter.

Just the same, it was hard at the dinner table to keep from telling about our find, especially when mother was wishing she could have an automobile like the wife of the man who runs the gingham mills.

"When I get rich," I told her, "I'll buy you a couple of them, and it won't be as long as you think, either."

"Bless the boy!" she exclaimed. "What is he talking about?"

"We ought to have a new house, too," I said. "This one is 'most as old as the Quaker Meeting

House. I'll build one bigger than Phillips's, yes, bigger'n Plunkett's."

"John," said she, "if you were not my son I'd think you had been drinking. Your cheeks are as red as fire and your eyes don't look natural. Where have you been and what have you been doing?"

"We've been playing up by the cave," I told her, and it was true.

She looked at me keenly for a minute before she spoke and I knew that she would find out something. You never can fool my mother.

"By the way," said she, "that reminds me. I have been looking all the forenoon for my frying pan and can't find it anywhere. You haven't seen it, have you?"

That settled it. It took a lot of questioning but she got the whole story.

Father laid back in his chair and laughed. "What will you crazy boys be up to next?" said he. "Gold! O, me; O, my! Somebody fan me."

It made me mad. "All right," I told him. "You needn't believe me if you don't want to but look at that. Maybe you will believe your own eyes."

I pulled out the bottle and handed it to him. He took one look at it and stopped laughing. Then he gave a long whistle.

"Where did you get this, John?" he asked.

"Up on the side of the mountain, south of Peck's Falls and farther up. Hank had a divining rod and it pointed to it."

He held the bottle up to the light, turning it first one way, then the other.

"I can't believe it is gold," said he, "but it certainly looks like it. There is gold, I presume, all through the Appalachian mountain system but not in sufficient quantities to give it value except in a few of the Southern states, where some mining has been done. Anyhow, I am afraid your mother will have to get along without an automobile. That gold, if it is gold, belongs to the man who chased you. You boys were on his land, stealing his property."

We hadn't thought of that. It doesn't seem right that a hill, or mountain, should belong to anybody in particular, and I told him so.

"A part of the hills—the best part—belongs to

us all," said he, smiling, "and that is the landscape. We all can enjoy the views but whatever is on the land belongs to the one which the law says is owner. Greylock peak belongs to the state but you were on somebody's farm."

"How about those strawberries which you ate for breakfast?" I asked him. "I picked them on the mountainside."

I had him there and he knew it.

"I believe you will make a good lawyer, John, when you grow up," said he. "I'd hate to think that those berries were not ours. They certainly were worth eating. Berries and things like that, growing in wild places, usually are considered public property by general consent, although I suppose the owner would have a right to fence them off and keep us out."

"'Tain't fair," I told him.

"Well, you are not the only one who has thought so. But we are getting into a pretty deep subject—property rights. We can do this, if the stuff should turn out to be gold. We can form a company and buy the mining rights from the owner."

In an hour's time the whole town knew of our finding gold. Some of the boys must have told. Everybody was excited and I had to show my bottle several times. Finally, Mr. Norton came around.

"What's all this nonsense about you boys having discovered gold?" he asked.

"Nonsense!" I began; then handed him the bottle. It didn't seem like nonsense to me.

He held it up to the light; then poured some of the stuff out into his hand and looked at it.

"Come over to the drug store," said he. "We'll soon find whether it is gold or not. I'll not say what I think it is, until after I have tested it."

"Give this boy the biggest ice cream soda in the place," he called to the clerk, after a few minutes.

"Let him drown his sorrow in the flowing bowl."

"Why, ain't it gold?" I asked him.

"Yes," said he, laughing. "Fool's gold."

"Fool's gold?"

"That is what it is called sometimes because it looks so much like gold and has fooled so many people. Wiser folks than you have been fooled

by it and had fleeting visions of wealth. Its real name is iron pyrites. The stuff is found in many places and you boys happened to stumble on to some. It has no particular value except when mined in large quantities for use in some of the industries. We'll have to study up about it some day."

"Do divining rods point to fool's gold the same as to any other?"

"Just as much as they do to the real stuff," he laughed.

I believe mother felt worse than we did about its being fool's gold, on account of the automobile I was going to give her.

"Anyhow," said she, finally, "you might bring back my frying pan. That will help some."

CHAPTER VIII

TAKING THE OATH

ALL that week, whenever they could get a chance, the Eagles had been busy training the Tigers and getting ready for the meeting, for Mr. Norton wouldn't let Dick Elmore and Frank Barker go to Boston with us unless they could wear Tenderfoot Scout pins.

The Ravens ran across them several times at the Basin and then we helped but it was the Eagles' job and they worked like good fellows. When the night of the meeting finally came around every member of the three patrols was at Mr. Norton's house by half past seven o'clock.

"We are here for serious business to-night, boys, and not for fun," said the Scoutmaster, after a few minutes of talk. "The making of a Scout is always serious business for we are adding to the character-level of the boyhood and manhood of the Nation.

"Jim, have you Eagles seen to the training of these Summer Street lads?"

"It wasn't any trick at all," Jim told him. "They caught on fast."

During the next hour Mr. Norton put the Tigers through a hard test and couldn't stick them once.

"You have done your work well," he said, finally. "Now we come to the important part—the Scout oath. You Ravens, being First Class Scouts already, may look on. The others will come forward."

"Let each Eagle stand by the lad he has trained," he went on, after the two patrols had gathered around him. "Dick, being patrol leader, you will receive the oath first. Hold up your right hand, palm to the front, thumb resting on the nail of the little finger, the other three fingers upright. Now repeat the oath after me."

Mr. Norton, holding up his own right hand, grasped Dick's left hand with his own left hand and began. We Ravens stood, for it didn't seem right to sit.

"On my honor I promise to do my best:"

"On my honor I promise to do my best:" repeated Dick in a low voice.

"To do my duty to God and my country and obey the Scout law;"

Dick's voice was strong now and clear. "To do my duty to God and my country and obey the Scout law."

"To help others at all times;"

"To help others at all times."

"To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

It was great to see Mr. Norton standing there with his eyes shining, giving that oath. I could hear Skinny whispering it over to himself as I waited. Dick raised his head and seemed to grow taller as he repeated,

"To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

The Scoutmaster then fastened a Tenderfoot's pin to Dick's coat.

"You will notice the three points on this pin," said he, "and the same three points in the Scout salute. It is like this as you already have learned:

Hold your little finger down with the thumb across the palm of your hand. That leaves three fingers upright, indicating the three points in the Scout oath. With your hand held in that position, raise the three fingers to your forehead or cap. That is the Scout salute to a superior officer. Raise the three fingers even with your shoulder; that is the Scout salute to a fellow Scout, one of your pals.

“Dick, the public will know by that pin that you have taken the Scout oath and they will judge your actions accordingly. More; to some extent they will judge me and the whole Boy Scout organization. Whenever you see the three points of your pin and whenever you raise three fingers in the Scout salute, think of the three points of your oath:

Duty to God and country is the first obligation of manhood. To help others is the second. We are all children of the Great Father, journeying through this wilderness which we call life. One of the best things which can be said of a boy, or man, at the end of that journey, is that he stopped on the way to help others.

“To keep yourself strong, alert and clean, is the

third point. You owe that to your own self-respect. You owe it to your parents, who love you and have given you to the world. You owe it to your country, which never can rise higher than the character and intelligence of its citizens. You owe it to God, Who has chosen you to be one of His partners in His great work of creation."

The Scoutmaster waited a moment; then stepped forward suddenly and fastened a white carnation on Dick's coat, near the pin.

"Fellows," said he, turning to us all, "it has seemed to me that a proper watchword for a Tenderfoot Scout is 'Cleanliness,' of which the white carnation is a fitting symbol. Cleanliness, what does that mean?"

He held up one hand and checked off the items one by one on his fingers and thumb.

"Clean teeth. Remember your oath and keep yourself physically strong. Clean teeth are an important part of the task.

"Clean breath. You cannot keep your oath as a Scout or obey Scout law, with your breath reeking of the foulness of a cigarette.

“Clean language. Nothing will so reveal the character and training of a boy as the language which he uses. Profanity is unworthy of a Scout.

“Clean thoughts. Throw mud into a spring and what happens? The whole stream grows dirty. Your mind is the spring. Every act of the body flows out of a thought of the mind. Keep your thoughts clean.

“Clean bodies, necessary to health and to decency.

“Until I can pin on you a new emblem in your progress as a Scout and give you a new watchword, ‘Courage,’ let ‘Cleanliness,’ Dick, in its five forms, guide your daily life.”

When each of the Tigers in turn had received the oath, it was time to go home and, shouting our good nights, we went out into the darkness. Our Boy Scout troop had three patrols.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE SEASHORE

MAYBE you never went to Boston. If you haven't you have missed a lot of fun. Our camping outfits were sent ahead, so they would be there when we arrived and one Monday toward the last of June we started. Our folks all went down to the depot to see us off. Some of the other boys were there, too, and altogether they made a big crowd.

"Where is Jim Donovan?" I asked, for I couldn't see him anywhere and it was almost time for the train.

"He will get on at the Gingham Ground," Mr. Norton told us. "I wonder if the others are all here. There are so many boys here whom we should like to take along and they keep moving around so, it is hard to tell who is here and who is not. I believe I'll ask the scribe of Raven Patrol to call

the roll. When a boy's name is called he may give his number, beginning with number one, and we'll keep those numbers throughout the trip. I intend to pin the orders for the day on my tent each morning and it will be easier to write that number one will wash the dishes than to say that Skinny Miller will. Skip number two; we'll leave that for Jim, and Dick will be number three."

Skinny groaned at the dishwashing part but yelled "one" when I called his name. Jim Donovan was two; Dick Elmore, three; Bill Wilson, four; Frank Barker, five; Benny Wade, six; Hank Bates, seven, and John Alexander Smith, which is myself, was eight and last. That is what one gets for being scribe—always last.

"The first's the worst," I told them, "the second's the same and the last is the best of all the game."

"You can wash the dishes first, if you want to," Skinny said. "I'd just as soon."

"I'll give you my number, too," Bill told me.

"The Tigers don't care," said Dick. "Give him ours."

Dick and Frank were Tigers; Jim was an Eagle, and the others, Ravens. Just then the whistle sounded and our folks made a grab for us to say good-by.

"Guess what," exclaimed Benny, just as we were climbing on the train. "We dassn't go. Skinny has forgotten his rope."

"Don't you fool yourself," Skinny told him. "I sent it along with the camping things. You never ought to go away without a rope, fellers, 'specially down to the seashore. There will be all kinds of chances to rescue folks."

The Gingham Ground station was only a mile below and we hadn't much more than started when we stopped for Jim. The Eagles were all down to see him off, looking as if they would like to go along.

"Never mind, boys," Mr. Norton called to them. "We'll have a lot of fun together when we get back, beginning with a campfire. Keep a stiff upper lip; your turn will come sometime."

At North Adams we changed cars and soon were rushing through Hoosac Tunnel; then out again,

and twisting around among the mountains, as we followed the windings of Deerfield River.

“That tunnel is worth knowing about,” said Mr. Norton, when we had come out into the light. “There is only one larger on the continent; in fact, in the Western Hemisphere. That one is a new tunnel on the Canadian Pacific railroad, through one of the Selkirk mountains, which is a quarter of a mile longer. They know how to build tunnels nowadays better than they did when Hoosac Tunnel was built. Connaught Tunnel, as it is called, was completed in three years without serious difficulty and at reasonable cost, less than six million dollars, I understand. Hoosac Tunnel was twenty-four years in building. It cost nearly two hundred human lives, not to mention fourteen million dollars.”

A little later he called us around him and pointed to a map, spread out on his knees.

“Perhaps you would like to see where we are going to camp,” said he. “This is a map of Boston Harbor. Let your eyes follow south from Boston along the coast line. Here, you see, is South Boston,

and there, farther down, is a peninsula, called Squantum. Now, you will notice, the coast begins to bear off toward the east and is very irregular. Beyond is another peninsula, called Hough's Neck. Do you see it? The map shows an island off the end, called Nut Island."

"If Bill gets lost," put in Benny, "we'll know where to look for him,—on Nut Island."

We all laughed but Bill didn't care; he was too busy looking at something else and pointing it out to Skinny. Then they both swung their arms and cheered as loud as they dared, being on a train.

"What is it, boys?" smiled Mr. Norton.

"Fishing Ground!" they both yelled, so loud that all the passengers looked up and laughed.

"It says so on the map," Bill explained. "Will we go fishing? O, no. Maybe not."

"Before you get to the 'fishing ground,'" Mr. Norton told us, "I want you to look for the biggest 'neck' of all. It is a long, narrow peninsula, which extends in a northerly direction several miles out from the coast line. West of the point is a sort of broken-off piece."

"I see it, fellers," said Skinny, holding up the map and pointing. "It looks like the left hind leg of a grasshopper."

"Well, let me tell you something. There is more fun to the square inch in summer time along that 'grasshopper's left hind leg' than anywhere else in Massachusetts, always excepting Bob's Hill and a certain cave. That long strip of land forms a bay on the land side, where you will find the water warm for swimming, and quiet, and where the fishing is good, as I shall show you soon after we get there.

"Through this back bay come the excursion steamboats from Boston to Nantasket Beach and various other seashore resorts. They are thick all up and down the peninsula, for that is Boston's great summer playground. You will find it only a few steps across the strip from the shore on the bay side, to the beach, where the ocean rolls and tumbles and great waves pour in with a swish and roar that I am very anxious to hear once more."

"I've heard it," said Benny. "We've got a big shell in our parlor at home and when you put it up to your ear you can hear the roaring of the sea."

"Is that where we are going to camp, on that peninsula?" I asked.

"Yes, a friend of mine was kind enough to make all the arrangements. He has a summer cottage at a beach, called Allerton, near the end of the peninsula. It is about three miles down the shore from Nantasket. So many people from Boston and all over the country go to Nantasket it will be well for us not to camp too near. As it is, we shall be close enough to go down there whenever we feel like it, listen to the band play in front of the hotel and watch the fun."

"How are we going to get down to the camping place?"

"We shall take the Nantasket steamboat from Boston for a little joy ride down the harbor and get off at a landing called Pemberton. From there an electric line runs to Allerton and beyond, not far from where we shall camp."

We reached Boston along in the afternoon and took the steamer, just as Mr. Norton had said, along with our camping outfit which was waiting for us. The air was hot in the city but on the boat there

was a cool breeze. It was great, sailing along through the water, with other big boats passing and going in and out of the harbor, bands playing and great crowds of people out for a good time.

We were almost sorry when the steamboat's bells began to signal to slow down, to back water, and other orders, as we glided up to the Pemberton landing. Then the boat backed away from the pier and started for Nantasket, leaving us standing alone, with our things piled up in a heap. It made us feel as if we were a long way from home.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Norton, "we must arrange to get these things taken over to Allerton as quickly as possible. It is not far."

"What time is it?" somebody asked, when finally our stuff had been landed at Allerton station and we had carried it over to a sandy spot between the electric railroad and the ocean. There was a hill close by, green like Bob's Hill, and it made us feel at home right away. We found afterward that sometimes it is called Green Hill.

"It's time to eat," said Skinny. "I can tell with-

out looking at my watch or asking questions. I'm a mind reader."

"Stomach reader, you'd better say," Frank told him.

"Well, they are the same thing, anyhow, about this time of the day, down at the seashore."

We looked to see what our Scoutmaster thought about it. "Dick," said he, "suppose that you and Frank pry open this box and see if there is anything inside that is good to eat. Skinny, we shall look to the Ravens to get a fire started. You fellows are pretty good at 'starting things,' I have noticed. Jim, see if you can find a pail. You and I will hunt up my friend's cottage and get some drinking water. There will be time enough to set up our sleeping tents after we have had supper. We'll not try to get settled before to-morrow."

After we had eaten and had put up the tents to sleep in, we sat for a long time on the sandy beach, sniffing in the salt air and watching the waves roll in with a noise like Peck's Falls. One by one the stars came out to welcome us and lights began to show up and down the harbor and along the shore.

Mr. Norton pointed out the different ones and told us what they were.

To the south we could see Minot's light, which stands on one of the most dangerous ledges along the Atlantic coast. In front, about ten miles, was the Lightship. Far to the north, when it had grown darker, we could see the Twin lights on Thatcher's island, and toward the west, near the Nahant shore above Boston, Egg Rock light.

"The nearest one is winking at us," said Dick. "It doesn't shine all the time but goes out and comes again. What light is that?"

"That is called Boston light," Mr. Norton explained. It stands on Brewster's island and marks the main ship channel to and from Boston. It is a revolving light; that is what makes it seem to wink. The light stands nearly one hundred feet above the water and it can be seen sixteen miles in clear weather."

"What do they do when it is foggy?"

"When the time comes you will not have to ask that question. A steam foghorn is blown and the sound can be heard for miles. Sailors listen for that

foghorn and when they hear it they know how to shape their course."

We were not any of us sleepy when Mr. Norton finally said that it was time to turn in and for us not to talk after we had gone to bed, because we had a busy day ahead of us and would need plenty of sleep.

As I lay there in the tent, listening to the sound of the waves, I almost could think that we were in the cave at home, with Peck's Falls roaring outside. Only yesterday we had said good-by to Bob's Hill and Greylock and our folks. It seemed much longer than that. Here we were far from home, down at the seashore, and not a sound anywhere except always that roaring and washing of the waters.

It seemed sort of scary in the dark and I reached over and touched Skinny, to make sure he was really there and I was not dreaming. He caught hold of my hand and closed my fingers around something which lay close to his head, where he could get hold of it any minute.

"Betcher life I brought my rope along," he whis-

pered. "Pedro, don't you ever go anywhere without a rope."

The noise of the sea was the last thing that we heard before dropping off to sleep and it was the first thing we heard in the morning. When I opened my eyes, the sun was shining. Swish—roar, went the waves. I couldn't understand it at first, or think where I was. Then Mr. Norton looked into the tent and held up a string of fish which he had caught in the bay. It didn't take us long to get up after that.

"Aw, why didn't you let us go along?" said Bill.

"You boys were sleeping so soundly I thought it best not to disturb you. Before we go home you will get all the fishing you want. Meanwhile, how will these fellows go for breakfast?"

We were busy most of that day, making camp and putting our things in order. That was fun, too, but the big fun came later. As Mr. Norton said, we had plenty of fishing; but it was in the bay and was too tame to suit us. What we wanted was to do some real fishing out in the ocean.

“If that is the case,” said our Scoutmaster, when we had told him about it, “you will need a real skipper to take you out; I know just the man. There are too many of you for one boat; you will have to take turns. Four of you may go to-morrow, if I can make the necessary arrangements, and the other four, some other day. You decide which four are going first while I do a little scouting outside.”

In about an hour he came back and with him was a weather-beaten, whiskery man, who we knew at once must be the skipper.

CHAPTER X

CAP'N JAKE AND THE SEA SERPENT

“**F**ELLOWS,” said Mr. Norton, “I want you to meet Cap’n Jake. That is what everybody calls him around here. He is owner, skipper, and crew of a famous catboat and dory. Cap’n, these are the lads I told you about. They are the best boys you ever saw—when they are asleep. The trouble is they never want to go to bed.”

A hoarse rumble came from Cap’n Jake’s whiskers somewhere, although we couldn’t see his lips move, and he held out a great hand which each of us shook in turn.

“These boys,” Mr. Norton went on, “have heard so many stories about the good fishing over near Harding’s Ledge, they want to try their luck.”

“Greatest place to fish in the world,” rumbled the skipper. “They bite like sixty but sometimes more so than others. Had to stand in the boat with a

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club t'other day to keep 'em from bitin' the passengers."

"Great snakes!" exclaimed Bill. "And us a-fishin' for perch in the bay!"

"Can we catch big ones, Cap'n Jake?" asked Skinny.

"Wall, not so very. You can't often get a cod out there that weighs more'n twenty to twenty-five pound, but they make good eatin', even if they are small. Once in a while, though, you can catch a real fish. Hooked one myself last week, just as a sudden squall was drivin' my dory on the rocks. Best dory on the coast and didn't want to lose her, but thought I was goin' to be wrecked sure."

"Were you wrecked?" said Skinny, his eyes beginning to stick out like saucers.

"Nope; not so's you would notice it. Might have been, mebbe, if it hadn't been for that fish. When he felt the hook he struck out for deep water and hauled me away from the rocks. Yes, sir; that's what he done. The dory pulled easy after he got her started. I kept him goin' by yankin' on the line with one hand every time he slowed down and

steered the boat with t'other. We landed on Allerton beach just afore the rain, which was dummed lucky for me for I didn't have any umbrell."

Bill heaved a great sigh and went through the motions of yelling.

"What did you do with the fish?" he asked, as soon as he could speak.

"The fish? When I got ashore I cut the line and let the critter go. You see, when a fish has saved you from shipwreck, so to speak, you hate like sixty to eat him up. It don't seem like a square deal."

"This time it would have been a square meal, anyhow," said Mr. Norton, with his eyes twinkling.

"That was some fish."

"Which of you boys are going in the morning?" he asked, turning to us.

"We drew cuts," I told him. "Skinny, Bill, Jim, and I held the lucky numbers."

A heavy surf was breaking on the shore the next morning when we four took our places in the dory and Cap'n Jake shoved off. There had been a strong east wind during the night but now there was hardly a breath of air stirring. The Swamp-

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scott dory was a flat-bottomed boat, with high, flaring sides, which the skipper told us could outride anything that blew.

"I know how to row," began Skinny, after we were well started. "I was the best rower on Long lake that time out in Indiana. Wasn't I, fellers?"

"Aw, you can't row any better than we can," Bill told him.

"I'll show you whether I can or not, if Cap'n Jake will let us."

We all wanted to try but we didn't think he would do it because the boat was being tossed around a great deal by the waves.

"Why, sure," said he. "You can row all you want to. Here, each of you take an oar and I'll steer. Let's see what you can do."

Say, if you ever feel like rowing to Harding's Ledge against a heavy swell, forget it, fish or no fish. The swell was bad enough and to make matters worse there was a current, called a cross tide.

I heard another rumble from the whiskers as Cap'n Jake took up his steering oar and told us to go ahead. Rowing on a little lake without a ripple

is different from rowing on the ocean against a heavy swell, with the boat going up one hill after another and down on the other side. Every once in a while, when we'd dip our oars in for a fearful pull, there wouldn't be any water there and we'd fall over backward on our heads.

The way the boat was pointed we didn't go straight across the swells but in a slanting direction, with a pitch and a roll, as we climbed to the top and then slid down into the trough of the sea, that gave us a queer feeling in the pit of the stomach.

"Great snakes!" I heard Bill saying to himself. "I wish I hadn't come."

I felt so badly myself that I turned around to see how Skinny was standing it. He was sick; it was easy to see that. His cheeks were pale, although he was working hard, and he was wetting his lips with his tongue.

"I don't feel just right," he groaned, when he saw me looking at him. "Something awful ails me. Do you think it is safe out here, Cap'n, with the water so rough?"

"Sure. This is nothin'. But mebbey we'd

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get along faster if you'd all pull t'oncet, instead of one at a time. We won't roll so much when we get to leeward of the ledge."

I guess I must have looked sick and wobbly, myself, for Bill, with his face as white as chalk and his eyes full of pain, leaned over and spoke to me.

"Stick, Pedro," said he. "Maybe we don't know how to row but we'll show this skipper guy that we are game."

I'd rather have lain down in the bottom of the dory, not caring what would happen next, but when Bill said that I ground my teeth together and pulled until I was dizzy.

Skinny says that if I tell all that happened on that trip I must write it in invisible ink. Anyhow, we got there at last, more dead than alive. After the skipper had found a good place to anchor, we began to feel a little better, although not much like fishing.

Harding's Ledge is about three miles from Allerton beach and is in line with Boston and Minot's lights. The tide was going out and the tops of some of the rocks were showing but at high tide they

are all under water. This is one of the most dangerous places on all the coast during a fog or gale, Cap'n Jake told us.

On one of the rocks they have built a beacon, a cube-like thing made of iron slats, about three feet each way and raised about twenty-five feet above the water on steel rods. Five hundred to six hundred feet east of it is a bell buoy, anchored fast. There is a deep-toned bell on it, which is rung by the motion of the waves. The sound can be heard above the noise of surf and wind. Between the beacon and buoy is where the smaller steamers go on the way to Plymouth and Provincetown but the main channel for ocean boats is to the north and east of Harding's.

We didn't find all this out until afterward. We didn't care anything about it at that time and wouldn't have cared if all the fish in the ocean had been packed in between the buoy and the beacon, waiting to bite. That is the way we felt at first, while Cap'n Jake was getting out lines and bait.

"I'll bet there ain't a fish in four miles of here," grumbled Skinny, as he let his line over the side

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of the dory. "Where's the fun in fishin' without a pole, anyhow?"

He hadn't any more than got the words out of his mouth when I saw him stiffen and his line start away from the boat. The rest of us were so interested watching him that we didn't throw in.

"Gee-whillikins, fellers!" he yelled. "It takes me to catch 'em. I'll bet I've got a whale. Is the boat anchored all right, Cap'n Jake? He's starting for the beach."

"Yep," rumbled the skipper, looking at the anchor line. "She's holdin' fust rate but pull him in easy-like, so's not to start her."

Skinny had to put up a good fight to land his fish but finally pulled it over the side of the boat.

"Heave him overboard!" ordered the skipper.

We didn't know at first whether he meant Skinny or the fish and were not going to do it, anyhow, because what's the use of heaving a fish overboard after you have managed to catch him? But the skipper reached over and threw the fish into the water. It made us mad.

"What was it, a shark?" asked Skinny.

"Nope; sculpin."

After that we all threw our lines in and soon there was a fast growing pile of fishes flopping around in the bottom of the boat. It was great fun.

"Now I'll show you somethin'," said the skipper, after we had begun to get tired.

He rigged a net with an iron hoop about four feet across and a piece of mackerel seine, fastened loose so that it bagged about a foot. Three ropes were fastened to the hoop, meeting in the middle above it, and to the ends of these ropes he tied a long line, to be used for hauling in the net. Then he baited and ballasted the net and lowered it over the stern to the bottom. In about ten minutes he pulled it up loaded with fish.

The skipper heaved overboard three sculpins and two fine, large fish which were shaped like mackerel. Those which he saved, he told us, were sea perch and tomcod.

"You threw over the best ones," Jim complained. "What made you throw over the two big fellows?"

"Them's polluck," he explained. "They spile quick after they come out of the water."

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Before we could ask any more questions there came a yell from Bill.

"I'm snagged!" he cried. "No; it's a fish."

"Keep him comin'," called Cap'n Jake. "Not too fast."

He made his way forward just in time to see a pair of big, wide open jaws break out of the water.

"Great snakes!" shouted Bill, dancing around, he was so excited. "What is it?"

The skipper didn't stop to talk. He grabbed the line with one hand; then reached over the gun'l with the other, caught the big fellow by the gills and hauled him in.

"Twenty-five pound cod," he told us.

"Twenty-five pound nothin'!" said Bill, holding the fish down for fear it would flop out of the boat. "He weighs a hundred; I 'most know he does."

We were so busy watching Bill that we didn't notice what Skinny was up to. When the skipper went forward to help Bill, Skinny was left alone with the net and he started to pull it in. As he did so, something began to kick and yank until he hardly

could hang on to the rope. It took all the strength he had but finally he managed to pull the net to the top of the water.

Startled by a shriek from Skinny, we looked and saw a monster fish, much longer than the net was across, jumping around fearfully and lashing the surface of the water into foam.

"Let 'er go, you lubber! Let go!" yelled the skipper.

But Skinny never lets go. He isn't built that way. He hung on, wild eyed and scared, until finally the monster poked his head through the net and sank out of sight.

It was a mackerel shark and if Skinny had let go the line when the skipper told him to, it would have saved the net.

I am not going to put in what Cap'n Jake said when he found that his net was ruined. We didn't hear much of it, anyhow, because while he was talking Bill slowly arose from his seat, pale and open-mouthed, and stood staring with wild eyes toward Nantasket. He didn't make a sound and I knew that something terrible must have happened.

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"What's the matter, Bill?" we shouted.

He raised one arm and pointed a shaking forefinger.

"Sea serpent!"

We looked, and a half mile away, coming swiftly toward us, was the sea serpent. It seemed a hundred feet long and as big as a barrel. The skipper was too busy with his broken net to notice anything else but we saw it, and it scared us half out of our wits.

On came the horrible monster, headed straight for the boat. We gave ourselves up for lost; then it turned a little and, as we looked, the terrible body broke up into eight pieces, each piece rolling and tumbling at a great rate.

Skinny was the first to come to his senses.

"Whales!" he yelled. "Cap'n Jake, where's your harpoon?"

"Whales? Whales?" rumbled the skipper, looking up at last. "Why, you—you—them's porpoises."

Before we could say anything more, a sudden change came over him and he made a quick grab

for the anchor rope. What had happened, he told us afterward, was that where he sat, facing south, he could feel a slight chill on his left cheek. It didn't mean anything to us but it did to him. To the eastward there was a slight ruffling of the water and beyond that, fog. He knew that the thing to do was to get out of there in a hurry. By the time the anchor was up we could feel puffs of east wind.

The boys took the same seats as before to row back but Cap'n Jake wouldn't have it that way.

"Here, two of you come for'ud and set," he said, "and two go aft and set."

He himself sat amidships and with long, strong pulls, started for somewhere but we couldn't tell where, for the fog now was all around us. We knew that we were clear of the rocks and that was all except that back of us we could hear the ringing of the bell buoy.

Then the fog horn at Boston light began to sound. The wind stiffened until it seemed to us boys to be blowing a gale. We were afraid that the great waves would swallow us up but Cap'n Jake pulled steadily and without a word, keeping

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the bell astern and shaping his course by the sound of the fog horn.

It was low tide when we grounded on the long beach, sloping gently up to low-water mark. The shallow water was fairly boiling with the fury of the wind and was lashed into foam but not a drop had come into the boat except the flying spray.

We found Mr. Norton and the boys waiting for us and growing anxious on account of the wind and fog. It surprised them when they saw all the fish.

"That's nothing," said Skinny. "You ought to have seen the big shark that I caught; but it got away."

"Something tells me," exclaimed Mr. Norton, "that we are going to have a big fish dinner to-day. We should like very much to have Cap'n Jake stay and help us eat it and let us thank him for taking such good care of these boys."

There came a rumbling from Cap'n Jake's whiskers. "They'll be ready to go to bed to-night," he said.

CHAPTER XI

CAMPFIRE ON THE BEACH

AFTER that until the Fourth of July we put in most of our time practising Scout stunts, fishing in the bay, or chasing up and down the beach and teaching the Tigers the things they had to learn before they could become First Class Scouts.

There was dish washing to do, and cooking but, as Mr. Norton said, many hands make light work. Besides, we made the Tigers do a lot of it. You see, they were just learning to be Scouts and it was good practice for them.

Later, Cap'n Jake took the other four boys out fishing but not until after the Fourth. Once we all went out in his Cape catboat and had all kinds of fun. It was a wonderful boat, Cap'n Jake told us.

"You've heerd of the 'Harpoon' of Quincy, 's likely's not?" he said. "What, never heerd of the

'Harpoon'? Where have you been livin', anyhow? She was owned by the Adams boys of Quincy and was the best boat in these parts except one. My cat could outpoint and outfoot her every time, and don't you forget it."

On the night of July 3 we had a big campfire on Allerton beach. It was wonderful, sitting there under the stars, with great ocean waves rolling in toward us, snarling and showing their teeth but not able to reach us, like a bull pup tied to a chain. Up and down the beach shone the lights of many resorts and cottages, while out in the darkness of the night sometimes a great boat would pass, all ablaze with lights and with a band playing on the deck.

We sat still a long time without saying a word. Finally, Mr. Norton seemed to shake himself out of a dream and threw on another log.

"To-morrow will be our day, fellows," said he, "and we must make the most of it. Christmas belongs to the world; so does New Year's. They are great days. But July 4 belongs to the United States and, more particularly, to Young America."

"We bought a lot of firecrackers and things up in the city to-day," Benny told him. "They'll know that we are around to-morrow."

"That is all right, if you do not carry it too far. A reasonable amount of noise and fireworks and fun seems inseparable from the day; but you and I are going to celebrate in a way that we never celebrated before. We are going up to Bunker Hill Monument and Boston Common and Old Faneuil Hall. They are among the sacred places in American history. I think that to-night it would be a good idea for us to talk it over and find out, if we can, why we propose to celebrate the Fourth. What is all this fuss about, anyhow, Skinny?"

He stood up and folded his arms. "They waited until they could see the whites of the enemy's eyes," he began; "then——"

"Yes, we've heard you mention something to that effect before," laughed Mr. Norton. "I know that the fighting part appeals to a boy and to the savage in all of us, but, surely, so much celebrating is not because a handful of American farmers held their own against the best trained soldiers of

Europe, until their powder gave out; then beat an honorable retreat. That was a great deal to do and it wrote a new page in our country's history, but it surely isn't why we celebrate."

"It's why I do," said Skinny. "Maybe I never told you, but I had a lot of folks in that battle and one of them was killed. We've got his old gun at home over the mantlepiece."

"Skinny is such an incorrigible patriot, I am afraid we never shall get him away from Bunker Hill back to Bob's Hill. Jim, can you tell us why we celebrate the Fourth of July?"

"The Declaration of Independence was signed that day in Philadelphia."

"Yes, sir," broke in Benny. "And the old bell ringer in the steeple when he heard of it rang Liberty Bell to beat the band, so that everybody would know that they had signed. I've seen the bell; it's cracked. Then all the people rejoiced and shot off firecrackers and pistols and carried on like crazy folks."

"And we have been carrying on like crazy folks every Fourth of July since that time?"

"Yes, sir; somebody has. I haven't because I'm not very old yet, but I've done a lot of it."

"Pooh!" said Skinny. "I knew all that but, betcher life, it didn't happen until after the fight on Bunker Hill."

"But why make such a fuss about signing a paper?" asked Mr. Norton. "Or about separating from England? England is a great nation and has a glorious history. She has made mistakes, and her treatment of her American colonies was one of the biggest of them, but every nation and every person makes mistakes some times. A nation is made up of people like you and me, and people are far from perfect. The trouble with England was not her people, however, it was the folly of her king. We should have a right to feel proud were we a part of the British Empire to-day."

"Why, Mr. Norton!" began Skinny, so surprised he hardly could speak.

"Of course, we are much more proud of being what we are; but why? That is what I am trying to get at. There must be a reason for everything."

"The Fourth of July is our country's birthday," said Bill.

"Yes; that, of course, is the immediate reason why we celebrate. In that old hall in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, this great Nation was born. Do you know, I think that next to Christmas, which celebrates the birth of Christ, July Fourth is the greatest date in all history and ought to be celebrated by the common people of all nations, England even, as well as America? A bigger and better thing than the American Nation was born on that day. July 4, 1776, was the birthday of Liberty. The right of the people to govern themselves was born on that day.

"If the people of the American colonies had not been Englishmen, possibly England might have been able to put across her mistaken policies; but they were English, most of them, and love for liberty had been growing in the minds of Englishmen for many years. They even had held up King John, you will remember, and forced him to sign what was called Magna Charta—the great charter—giving them more liberties under the

government. That was another great day in history."

"They still have a king in England," I said.

"Yes; but he doesn't begin to have the power which is given to the President of the United States. In this country, away from kings and emperors, the idea took firmer root that just because certain people happened to be born into certain families was no reason why they should be permitted to rule and lord it over everybody else. They believed that people who happened to be born in other families had the same right to say what should be done with their property, their country and themselves."

Skinny was getting on his feet again; we tried to grab him but he slipped away from us.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," he recited, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

"That is the way the Declaration of Independence expresses it. Of course, it does not mean that all men are created with equal abilities, because they are not. It does not mean that all men are created

with equal opportunities. I am sorry to say that they are not at the present time, although it may come true some day. It means that you and I, the Eagles, the Tigers, the Ravens, all the people, whether rich or poor, great or lowly, wise or uneducated, are equal before the law. That by right there cannot be one law for me and another for my neighbor, or some one less fortunate, any more than in school there can be one rule for you and another for another set of boys, or that in your ball games there can be one set of rules for your nine and another for the team against which you are playing."

"Great snakes!" exclaimed Bill. "There would be something doing if they did that."

"In the same way there was 'something doing' in 1776. That was a great principle to establish and while it doesn't always work out in fact even now and there is room for much improvement and growth, the day that saw the people of America successfully establish that principle was one of the greatest days in the history of the world and properly might be celebrated by the people of every

nation. It is a principle which we should be willing to fight for and defend with our lives against the whole world, if need be."

Bang! went a big firecracker; then a whole bunch. Skinny jumped and began to dance around the fire, we after him, chanting Indian talk and shaking clubs. Louder and louder grew the singing and faster and faster, the dance, until Bill couldn't stand it any longer. He leaped into the air and cracked his heels together; then stood on his hands and kicked, while we pranced around him, giving the most awful yells you ever heard.

Skinny grabbed a board and paddled him where it would do the most good, to give him something to yell about; but before the rest of us could do the same Bill bounded to his feet and in a second there was a free-for-all scrap, with everybody grabbing at everybody else and trying to drag him down the beach into the water. One after another we stopped to watch Skinny and Bill. They had clinched, halfway to the water, each one trying to push the other in and each one finding the other too strong.

"Come on, boys," whispered Hank, motioning with his arms. "Now. All together!"

We made a rush and ran them both into the ocean but before we could get away again a great wave rolled up and splashed around our feet, halfway to our knees.

"I guess the country is safe," laughed Mr. Norton, when we had scrambled out again and up on the beach. "I am wondering what they thought over in England when they heard William yell."

Bill opened his mouth and was going to do it again but we grabbed him and would have thrown him into the water once more if he hadn't stopped. We were afraid somebody would get after us. Bill's yell is awful.

CHAPTER XII

BUNKER HILL

FOURTH of July is different down at the seashore. At home, if we do not awaken earlier, we get up when the church bells begin to ring at four o'clock in the morning. Bang! goes the cannon on Bob's Hill, dragged up there the night before. Ding-dong, ding-dong, go the church bells. Out of bed we jump without being called, which it is hard to do any other day except Christmas, fumbling with our shoes in the half darkness; then hustle out and away, firing crackers as we run and sniffing in the smell of burning powder. It's great.

But down on the beach there were no church bells to ring and not many folks at that time of day to hear them; nothing but water as far as we could see, and farther, and sand all around.

I was lying in the tent, sort of half asleep and thinking of the bells ringing back home and how

quiet it was at the beach except the noise of the sea, when rattle, bang, biff, boom, went a whole bunch of firecrackers right in the middle of the tent, with us boys rolling over to get out of the way and Skinny's laughing face looking in from the outside.

Some one threw a shoe at him; then out we rushed into the morning and after slipping into our bathing suits ran down the beach for a plunge into the ocean, splashing around like so many fishes. Those morning swims were the most fun of all. Ocean water is colder than at the Basin even but after you've ducked it's fine, and easy to swim in on account of the salt.

At breakfast Skinny was strangely quiet and seemed to be thinking about something. Soon after we had finished eating I missed him but didn't say anything about it because it wasn't his turn to help with the dishes and I was too busy.

We were just getting through with the work when Benny came running up, all excited, and dragged us out to where the sand was as smooth as a floor and hard packed. Then we began to get excited, too, for there on the sand was the Sign, as

big as life, and it said for us to meet at the cave right away. We'd hardly have had time to get there even if we had known where it was.

We all stood around looking except Skinny. Nobody knew where he was but we felt sure that he had drawn the Sign.

"Skinny is crazy," said Bill at last, "to talk about caves where there isn't anything but sand."

"It says to meet at the cave, all right," Benny told him, "and the Sign never lies."

"Show us the cave, then. We are ready to meet."

For answer Benny, who had been looking around, pointed to a big arrow which had been drawn in the sand a little farther down the beach. Above the arrow were two birds and below, a tiger. Anyhow, it looked some like a tiger and Benny said that it had to be a tiger because it wasn't anything else.

We knew then that Skinny, the Raven, had shown us the way to go to find the cave and had drawn an eagle and a tiger besides a crow, so as to be polite to the boys of the other patrols.

We could see the prints of his feet, where he had

chased down the beach, and didn't need the arrows which we found all along. Finally, after winding around back and forth two or three times, we came to another Sign and a bigger arrow pointing straight into the ocean. The footprints, too, turned and led down the slant of the beach into the water and out of sight under the great waves, which came rolling toward us, showing their teeth, until with a roar they foamed up over the sand to our feet; then ran back again as if to get a better start.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "Skinny has started to walk across."

"Maybe he has found a cave out there somewhere by diving down," Hank thought.

"It must be a long way out, then," I told him. "You can wade, I don't know how far."

We looked across the water, half expecting to see Skinny swimming out there, or beckoning to us with only his head in sight, but we could see nothing except a big boat of some kind steaming toward Boston.

"He is fooling us," said Jim. "He must have waded in and then come out again farther up or

down the beach, in order to throw us off the track."

"No," Hank told us. "It's the tide. Don't you see? The tide is coming in and has covered the trail. It will cover us, too, if we don't move pretty soon."

"Hank is right," Bill decided. "We must find where he turned back from the water. Part of us can go one way and part the other, until we strike the trail again."

That sounded like good sense and we tried it. Dick's party found the tracks leading up out of the water about a quarter of a mile down the beach. From there it was easy and pretty soon we came to where the tracks stopped and an arrow pointed to a big mound of sand.

"Open seezum!" said Bill, hitting the mound a whack with his stick.

On the other side, in a little cave which he had built up and scooped out of the sand, we found Skinny waiting for us.

"This ain't much of a cave," he said, when we had thrown ourselves down on the sand beside him, "but it will do; only we'll have to hold the meetin'

right away before the tide gets here. I was afraid that you wouldn't come in time."

Bill lighted a big firecracker and threw it at the ocean; then stood on his hands, kicked his feet toward the water and whistled through his teeth. That was what we all thought as we gathered around Skinny to find out what the meeting was about and hear what he had to say.

"Fellers," said he, after the scribe had called the roll and everybody had answered according to what patrol he belonged to, some cawing like crows, some roaring like tigers, and Jim screaming like an eagle, or like something that sounded fierce.

"Fellers, this is the Fourth of July, the greatest day in the year. It's up to us to do something, after what Mr. Norton said last night. Back over there is Boston, the Cradle of Liberty. I've been trying to think what to do to let 'em know that we are here and that we love our country."

"If you can't think of it, Skinny," broke in Hank, "there is no use in us trying."

"Cradle of Liberty is it?" put in Benny.

"What's the matter with rocking the cradle?"

"You said it that time, boy," shouted Skinny. "We've got to do something big, I tell you; something that will jar 'em and make 'em think what it means to live in the United States of America, like Mr. Norton said. It must be something more than firecrackers. Everybody will be firing them. They'll expect that."

"We might all go down to Bunker Hill Monument and fire a salute," said Dick.

"Of course we'll do that. I've got to do it because thirteen of my ancestors, counting all their folks that were there, were in the battle, and one of them was killed."

"Thirteen is an unlucky number," said Jim, shaking his head. "It's a wonder that more of 'em were not killed; but, of course, as soon as one had been killed there were only twelve left."

"They didn't stop to think about unlucky numbers. They were too busy watching for the whites of the enemy's eyes."

"Well, what have you thought of?"

For answer, Skinny stood up, folded his arms and began his school piece:

*"Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in seventy-five,
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year."*

"This isn't the eighteenth of April; it's the Fourth of July."

"That doesn't matter; it makes it all the better."

"Great snakes, Skinny," began Bill; "do you mean——"

"Betcher life I do. Say, it will surprise 'em some when they see a lantern hanging in the steeple of the old North church, just like Paul Revere saw it back there in 1775. I'll bet that nobody has hung a lantern there since that time and it was more than a hundred years ago. It's a shame. They ought to do it every year."

"I think there were two lanterns," I told him. "What does your piece say about it?"

Skinny thought a minute, saying over the verses to himself until he came to the part about the signal; then he went on out loud,

*"He said to his friend, 'If the British march
By land or sea from town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North church tower, as a signal light,
One if by land and two if by sea.'"*

"Two," he told us, "for they started in boats. I read it in a book; besides, the piece says so farther on."

"Maybe we can find where Paul Revere used to live," said Benny, "and borrow his lanterns."

When he said that we all patted him on the back so hard it most knocked his breath out.

"That is a very brilliant idea," laughed Mr. Norton, when we told him about it afterward. "There is only one thing the matter with it. Old North church was burned by the British for firewood during the siege of Boston. It stood in North square where the soldiers were quartered."

My, but Skinny was mad when he heard that.

"Burnt it!" he exclaimed. "For firewood! Say, it was lucky for them that the Band wasn't there—I mean the patrol."

"Paul Revere's house is still standing, I believe,

in the same old square. It used to be the choice part of Boston but now is the center of the Italian district. In the evening after the Boston massacre Revere displayed some pictures of the massacre in the upper windows, that did much to arouse the people."

"However," Mr. Norton went on, when he saw how badly we felt about the British having burned the old church, "historians and poets do not always agree. It is true that Longfellow's poem says that the signal lanterns were hung in the tower of old North church and some historians say the same; but there is a tablet on the tower front of Christ church in Salem street which says, without any ifs or ands about it, that the Paul Revere signal lanterns were displayed there. We'll have a look at it when we go up to the city."

Skinny's face beamed when he heard that and I knew that there would be something doing in the lantern business before we came back.

"How are you going to manage it?" I whispered.

"Leave it to me," he said, "and mum's the word."

We took the boat for Boston a little later and there was so much to see and do that we soon forgot about the lanterns, all but Skinny. He was carrying a queer shaped package. We wondered what it was at the start; then had something else to think about.

"I suppose that the first place to visit is Bunker Hill Monument," suggested Mr. Norton, winking at me. "I am sorry that it stands on Breed's Hill instead of Bunker Hill but that is not my fault. The battle was fought there."

It gave us a queer feeling, a little later, when we had reached Charlestown and were looking up at the tall shaft, to think of how a few brave Americans, so long ago, stood out there against trained soldiers until they didn't have any more powder.

"They couldn't do it now," Mr. Norton told us. "The methods of warfare have changed and untrained soldiers would not stand much chance, no matter how brave they were, against trained troops. Nowadays the enemy would get off ten miles, or more, and blow the whole hill into the ocean."

"There you are, Skinny," he went on, pointing

to a bronze statue that stood in the pathway. "That is a statue of Colonel William Prescott who commanded the American troops in the battle where you lost your ancestor. See, he is holding back his men. You may have heard it mentioned, boys," he laughed, "that he said to his troops, 'Don't fire until I tell you. Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes.' He is said to have stood on that very spot, facing a different direction, however, when he gave the order to fire."

"Fellers," cried Skinny, his eyes shining and his cheeks as red as apples, "take off your hats!"

"Load!" he shouted.

Each of us pulled out a big firecracker, the biggest we could buy, and a match, and stood there waiting.

"Ready! Light crackers!"

Eight matches crackled and sputtered and eight fuses smoked and sizzled, burning their way slowly down toward the powder. I began to be afraid that I'd have to drop mine and run, it was getting so close.

"*Fire!*"

We had surrounded the statue while waiting for the signal. At the word, eight giant crackers were thrown into the air above Colonel Prescott's head. Then, as they went off like a gatling gun with a terrible roaring, Skinny drew the American flag from his pocket and waved it to beat the band, while we all cheered, Bill Wilson louder than anybody.

Mr. Norton, who had been standing to one side away from us, looked sort of dazed and startled. It all had happened so quickly that he didn't have time to stop us and didn't know whether he ought to stop us or not. The noise hardly had died away when we heard the sound of hurrying feet and two big policemen came running up.

"What are you kids doing here?" shouted one of them angrily. "Be off wid ye, or I'll run yees in."

"For the love of Pete!" exclaimed the other. "I thought it was a riot."

Skinny was mad and he was scared; it was easy to see that; and we all were. We felt better, having Mr. Norton near, but he didn't say a word, only waited to see what we'd do.

He didn't have to wait long. Skinny laid the flag across his chest and faced the policemen.

"You dassn't run us in," said he. "This is the Fourth of July and I guess we can make all the noise we want to. Here's where a handful of Americans waited till they could see the whites of their eyes and then lammed it to the British soldiers, and one of my ancestors was killed. We've got a right to fire a salute to them on the Fourth of July."

The policemen stared at him; then burst into a laugh.

"Begorra," said one of them, "right ye are and its mesilf that wishes Michael Flannigan had been there for the glory of ould Ireland. Salute all ye want to, me lads. I'll arrist the first mon that stops ye, if he be the mayor himsilf."

It is a great sight from the top of the monument, looking out over the city. We had climbed up a winding stairway, two hundred ninety-five steps, for we counted them. The monument was begun in 1825, Mr. Norton told us, when the corner stone was laid by LaFayette. Daniel Webster made the speech. It took twenty years to finish the monu-

ment because of lack of money. Finally, a lot of American women got back of the work and the funds were raised.

“These men who fought here,” he added, “laid the corner stone of a far greater monument than Bunker Hill, as I told you yesterday—government by representation, human liberty. Guard that monument, boys, as you would guard your homes, your lives, and the honor of a Scout.”

CHAPTER XIII

SIGNALS IN OLD NORTH CHURCH

“**W**E’LL go over and take a look at the United States Navy Yard while we are in Charlestown,” said Mr. Norton, after we had come down from the monument and shaken hands with the policemen. “The Navy Yard occupies the point where the British troops landed for the battle. Afterwards we’ll go back to Old Boston where there is enough to see to keep us busy until evening.”

It would take up too much room to put down all that we saw and learned in Old Boston.

“We’ll paralyze teacher when we get back to school,” Bill told us. “I’ll bet she doesn’t know all these things.”

“Mine does,” said Benny. “She knows ’most everything.”

Anyhow, we saw a lot and learned a lot—I mean about the history of our country.

One time we were walking down the crooked streets, thinking how easy it would be to get lost, when we came out into a sort of "square" and Mr. Norton stopped in front of a queer, old building. It had a steeple with a bell in it and looked some like a church, only there were markets on the first floor, where they sold all kinds of things to eat.

"Here is one of the sacred places of America, fellows," he said. "It is called the 'Cradle of Liberty.'"

It looked more like a cradle of vegetables to us and we told him so.

"It is old Faneuil Hall," he replied. "The lower part is a 'cradle of vegetables,' as you have suggested, for it is used as a public market and was built for that purpose. Long ago, when Boston was only a small place, the people had been quarrelling over the market system. Some wanted a public market in one part of the town, some in another, and others wanted something else. A man named Peter Faneuil settled the question by building a market house in Dock Square at his own expense and giving it to the town on condition that it

should be maintained as a public market. Over the market he had built a hall, which in those early days was thought very large and beautiful. The building was completed and given to the town, my guide book says, in 1742. Mr. Faneuil died soon after and his funeral was the first public meeting held in the hall.

“Twenty years later the building was partly destroyed by fire but was rebuilt and in 1898 the whole building was inclosed in fire proof material as you see it now. It is wider and one story higher than the original building. When the old hall was rebuilt in 1762 it was dedicated to liberty and later became known as the ‘Cradle of Liberty.’ We’ll visit it after we have had some dinner.”

“I was thinking about dinner, myself,” Skinny told him. “Seeing all those things to eat over there makes us hungry.”

After dinner we went back to Faneuil Hall. “Hats off, boys,” said Mr. Norton. “That is the best salute to give a place like this.”

“Why is it called the ‘Cradle of Liberty’?” I asked, after we had signed our names in a big book

to show that we had been there, and were standing once more looking at the building from the street.

“It is because Boston was the center of events which led up to the Revolution and this old hall was the center of Boston. All the town meetings were held here, and various patriotic gatherings. Here is where the hated Stamp Act was denounced. When it finally was repealed by the English Parliament, Faneuil Hall was lighted in honor of the event.

“Fiery old Samuel Adams, who has been called the Father of the Revolution, often addressed the people here. He was a great patriot. While you boys are in the saluting business you ought to salute him. The towns of Adams and North Adams were named for him.

“A committee was formed in Faneuil Hall to draw up a paper, stating to the world what the rights of the colonists were claimed to be. Since the Revolution it also has been a notable place and the country's ablest orators have spoken here. The name, ‘Cradle of Liberty,’ really came from those old town meetings where the people of

Boston used to discuss the rights of the colonies and whether it would be proper for them to resist England."

"Betcher life it was proper," said Skinny. "Say, I wish the Band had been there to help."

"You boys have just as important work to do, and that is to defend and maintain the rights for which our forefathers struggled. In one way this old hall illustrates the formation of our government—as a place for holding town meetings. You see, our system of government starts with the people and works up to the President, instead of starting with a king, or emperor, and working down to the people. In a representative republic like this the ruler has rights only as the people permit. In a monarchy the people have rights only as the ruler permits. There is quite a difference, you see, a difference worth struggling for and maintaining.

"Our government starts when the people of a township, neighbors to one another, get together and talk things over, much as you boys do at your cave. That is called a town meeting and it is necessary, of course, that the people should have some

hall to meet in. When you boys start out to play ball you sometimes get together and decide about the rules of the game, who is to be captain, who will play first base, who will go first to bat, is over the fence out and so on. That is very much like a town meeting, where grown-up boys decide how they shall play the game of government. There were some hot discussions in Faneuil Hall in the early days.

“I wonder if I can explain our system of government in a rough way that you will understand. First, as I have said, we have the towns, as a beginning. Here, then, we have a group of towns which have much in common and naturally would play the game together. They form a little league, called a county, and county meetings are held at some central town, called the county seat. It wouldn't be easy for everybody in the towns to go to such meetings, so for convenience each town selects one or more players to go up and act for all the rest. That is what we mean by representative government.

“Next we have a group of counties, forming what is called a state, and state meetings are held

at the state capital. All the people of the counties would not be able to get into the statehouse, even should they go down; so they choose certain representatives to meet for them and play in the state league, so to speak. Then each state puts a team into the National league, which we call the United States of America. Finally, we have an all-star team which represents the Nation in a world series of games with other nations. We call our captain, President of the United States.

“But here is the point: Government of the people by representation with us starts back in the town meetings, where neighbors get together and set the ball rolling. Much that we have and much that we are as a Nation, we owe to the patriots who used to meet in this old hall.”

“Gee,” said Skinny, when Mr. Norton had stopped for breath. “It’s great but, honest Injun, we’d rather play the real thing. Wouldn’t we, fellers?”

“Now, boys,” said Mr. Norton a little later when we were passing a large building, “I am going to step into one of these offices for a minute, shake

hands with an old friend and see if any mail has come for me. Before leaving home I promised to report here at about this hour every time I came to Boston. You see, some business or other matter might come up suddenly, making it necessary to get hold of me quickly. It is not probable that anything will come up but a promise is a promise and a Scout is trustworthy, you know."

We waited outside until he came out a few minutes later with a yellow paper in his hand and looking very much disturbed.

"It is a telegram from my wife," he explained. "Something has happened which makes it necessary for me to run over to Holyoke this afternoon. I don't like to spoil your day, boys, but cannot leave you in this large city alone. I'll put you on the Nantasket boat but there will not be time for me to go with you. You will have no trouble, however, making your way to the camp from Pemberton. I'll come back in the morning."

We all made such a fuss about leaving Boston that he tried to think of some other way out of it.

"I'll tell you what we can do," he exclaimed finally. "We'll call up the Scout Commissioner, explain what has happened and ask him to give us the address of some reliable rooming house where you can stay to-night. Then we all can go back to camp to-morrow together. I'll ask him also to send a Scoutmaster, or somebody, to show you boys around the city, both this afternoon and in the morning, but leave word where you will be at a certain hour so that I can find you."

"I have the address," he told us, when he had come out of the telephone booth. "We'll go over and take a look at the place; then wait for the man he said he would send. Skinny is so fond of Parker House rolls that I was tempted to put you up at the Parker House where they first came from but a quiet rooming house will be better for you than a hotel and will be cheaper, something which it is necessary for us to consider."

We found a large, comfortable house in a quiet neighborhood and were given two rooms on the third floor, with two beds in each room. Pretty soon a young man came who said that his name was

Wheeler and that he had been sent by the Commissioner to take us in charge. That made everything all right but Mr. Norton hated to leave us, just the same.

The afternoon went fast after that and we saw all kinds of things. When we had begun to grow tired we went over to Boston Common to rest before getting some supper. Boston Common is a park in the middle of the city, where people used to pasture their cows when Boston first was settled.

It was beginning to grow dark when Mr. Wheeler took us back to the rooming house and left us for the night.

“I’ll come again at nine o’clock in the morning,” he said. “You can get breakfast here—I have made the arrangements—and afterward we shall have time to look around some more before Mr. Norton arrives.”

We were shown to our rooms which opened together and sat there a long time, talking over the big doings of the day. Skinny was restless. He kept walking to the window, looking out and finger-

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ing the queer shaped package which he had carried all day.

“What’s in the bundle?” we asked, finally.
“Something to eat?”

“Sh-h!” he exclaimed, slowly unwrapping it.
“Mum’s the word!”

In a minute we saw what it was—a lantern. Bill was disgusted.

“Lantern!” he snorted. “And electric lights all over the house!”

“Bill,” said Skinny, “you are a good feller but you ain’t up on history.”

Then I knew what he meant and said over the words of the poem out loud,

*“Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North church tower as a signal light.”*

“Betcher life! I’d be ashamed to go home without doing it. It wouldn’t be right. It wouldn’t be patriotic.”

Skinny went to the window again and pointed to a ladder which was fastened to the wall outside. It was a fire escape.

"We can slip out," he told us, "hang the signal, then slip back again and nobody will know that we have been away. Nobody will care, anyhow. It's for our country."

"Skinny," said Bill, "you have a great head, like a tack. I'll be the first one out, anyhow."

As he spoke he climbed through the window to the ladder and made his way down. One after another, we followed, until all stood on the ground; then slipped through the darkness of an alley to a lighted street beyond.

We had to inquire the way several times but at last we stood in front of the old church, looking up at the tower where the Paul Revere signal lights were hung long ago and from which General Gage, commander of the British army, watched the battle of Bunker Hill.

It was too dark to read the words but we knew that the tablet on the tower front said, "The signal lanterns of Paul Revere, displayed in the steeple of this church April 18, 1775, warned the country of the march of the British troops to Lexington and Concord."

What bothered Skinny was that he had only one lantern.

"The piece says two," said he, "'one if by land and two if by sea,' but what is a feller going to do when he hasn't got two?"

Benny wanted to go up to Paul Revere's house and borrow one. "Maybe they have the very same ones," said he.

"No, Benny," I told him. "Paul Revere didn't hang up the signals. The sexton did that; then climbed out of a back window and went to bed with his clothes on. He didn't have time to undress because he wanted to be in bed when the signal was discovered by the British. Paul Revere did the riding."

But we couldn't think of any way out of it until Hank, all of a sudden, slapped his knee and began to laugh.

"The pinwheel!" said he, when he saw us looking at him. "We've got a big one left. Use the pinwheel for one signal and the lantern for the other. It will look like something then; it will look like a fire."

"Hank," Skinny told him, "you have saved the Fourth of July and done something for your country. Come on, fellers. Sneak across, one at a time, and slip through the door. I'll go first."

He ran across the street and tried the door. It was locked.

We gave a groan and it looked for a minute as if there wouldn't be any Paul Revere signals that night.

"They never ought to lock a church," mourned Skinny. "Somebody might want to get in."

"What's the matter with breaking in?" asked Bill.

"It's bad luck to break into a church but it's for our country and that might make a difference. Maybe we'd better risk it."

Just then one of the boys gave a warning hiss. Looking across to where he was pointing, we saw a man go up the steps of the church, take a key out of his pocket and unlock the door."

"It's the sexton," said Skinny. "Come on, fellers. We'll slip in; then hide and wait until he goes."

"What if he sees us?"

"He can't any more than kill us, can he? We can tell him that we wanted to see the inside of the old church where the signal lights were hung. It's the truth, too."

We hurried across and slipped through the door; then hid under the pews. We could hear the man rummaging around somewhere. At last he went out and we heard him lock the door from the outside. Then we crawled from under the pews and started for the tower, groping our way up through the dark.

We didn't dare light the lantern for fear that someone would see it before we were ready.

"It's for our country," whispered Skinny. "Hurry, fellers. They will be surprised, I guess, when they see the signal lights."

At last we reached the belfry without breaking our necks and crouched there in the shadows.

"If there had been as many houses then as there are now," said Dick, "General Gage couldn't have seen much of the battle."

It was great, looking out over the city, where the

lights of evening were beginning to shine and twinkle. We could see skyrockets shoot into the air over by the Common, then break into a shower of fire and come raining down. We sat there a long time, looking.

Finally, Skinny lighted the lantern and hung it up and Hank, after a lot of trouble, fastened the big pinwheel to one of the timbers by a nail, so that it would turn. Somebody lighted the fuse and with a great sizzling and sputtering the wheel began to move. Faster and faster whirled the circle of fire, spouting out a great fountain of sparks, while we swung our hats and went through the motions of yelling, watching to see that the sparks didn't set anything on fire and careful not to make any noise.

Pretty soon, down below we could hear the people cry out in surprise at what they saw. They gathered in groups, talking excitedly and pointing. It made us feel proud. Skinny was real chesty over it.

"Didn't I tell you they'd be surprised?" he said. "But, just the same, Boston ought to be ashamed of

itself to be surprised. Here is where the Cradle of Liberty is and where Paul Revere's signal lanterns were hung out, and here is where they watched for the whites of the enemy's eyes. They ought to have a town meetin' every year on the Fourth of July or the eighteenth of April; then at a certain hour, while the crowd waits with hats off, they ought to hang up the signal lanterns. Then everybody would yell to beat the band and——"

We couldn't hear the rest for Bill Wilson forgot where he was when Skinny told about the yelling part and, swinging his hat, let out a terrible screech. The pinwheel had slowed down, getting ready for a fresh start on the last fuse and was beginning to whirl again harder than ever, throwing sparks in every direction.

Bill's voice hadn't any more than died away and he was drawing in his breath to do it again, when the cry was taken up down below.

"Fire!" somebody yelled.

"Fire! Fire!" came from farther down the street and from over beyond.

"The old church! Save the church!"

“ Now you’ve done it, Bill,” said Skinny. “ They think the church is on fire.”

As he spoke, we heard the clang of a fire engine coming down Salem street and a great crowd began to gather below.

CHAPTER XIV

“FIRE! FIRE!”

WE were paralyzed at first, it all had happened so suddenly. The fire engine was almost to the church and we could hear others coming, when Skinny woke up.

“We must light out of this, fellers,” he said. “It will spoil everything if they find us here.”

He started down the stairs as he spoke, and, one after another, we followed him, growing more frightened every second. We could hear somebody trying to break through the front doors.

“The back way,” whispered Skinny. “The sexton who hung the Paul Revere signals climbed out through a back window. We can get out there while they are breaking in the front door.”

Stumbling through the old church, we ran as best we could in the darkness, trying to find some way to get out without being seen. Then, after we had reached the back part of the church and were work-

ing at a window, crash went the back door and some firemen rushed into the room, carrying a hose.

We made a rush to get out but they were too quick for us and blocked the way.

“To the front!” called Skinny. “Beat it!”

We made our way to the front as fast as we could, with our hearts pounding like trip hammers.

Crash went the front door; in came more firemen. And there we were, trapped! When they saw us they were surprised and thought at first that we were firemen from the back way.

“Where’s the fire?” shouted one.

“There ain’t any,” said Skinny.

“What are you kids doing here?”

“Nothin’; only celebratin’.”

“We’ll give you a chance to finish your celebration in jail with a nice ride to start off on.”

He blew a whistle and before we knew what was happening some policemen rushed in and grabbed us. They hustled us out of doors and into a covered car; in another minute we went tearing down the street.

Skinny wet his lips with his tongue and tried to say something.

"Never you mind," said the policeman. "Just save your breath until we get there. You will need it all, then."

A few minutes later the car stopped and we were hustled into a building. Down a corridor they led us; then pushed us through a grated door into a little room. The door was slammed shut and locked; the footsteps died away down the hall. We were alone.

Nobody said a word for nearly a minute. Then Benny looked up at me, scared-like and with horror in his eyes, and exclaimed under his breath,

"It's the jail!"

That's what it was, or something like it, and it scared all of us.

"Great snakes!" Bill whispered to himself. "I wish I hadn't come."

We were left alone there a long time, or so it seemed, talking in low tones to one another and wondering what was going to happen next. It was

awful. Benny seemed to feel the worst of all. You see, he hadn't ever been in jail before.

“I promised my mother never to get in jail,” he whimpered, over and over again.

“Never mind,” I told him. “We haven't done anything to be put in jail for and Mr. Norton will get us out as soon as he comes back.

“He'll never think of looking for us in a jail,” he said.

“Sure he will. The first thing he'll do will be to get the police to look for us. Then he'll hear about it and will get busy. Say, we'll have something to tell the other boys when we get home.”

I talked brave and tried to cheer him up but I felt just as he did. In jail! I never could look my mother in the face again.

Pretty soon Skinny began to get mad about it. He went to the grated door and shook the bars.

“You're a nice bunch,” he shouted down the corridor. “You dassn't take somebody of your size. This is a great ‘cradle of liberty’; nit!”

He wanted Bill to give one of his yells. “That will bring them,” he urged. But there didn't seem

to be any yell left in Bill. He shook his head, mournfully.

"I yelled once too often," he said. "That's what did it."

"No, it was the pinwheel. The bone heads saw that and thought the church was on fire. It would have been just the same if you hadn't yelled."

"I can't do it, Skinny. I—I don't feel very well."

"We surprised 'em, anyhow," said Skinny, after a minute. "Betcher life they won't forget us in a hurry. We 'rocked the cradle,' all right, Benny, just as you said. Maybe they will hang out lanterns every year after this."

After what seemed an age, we heard steps coming down the hall. A man stopped at our door and unlocked it.

"Come out," he ordered. "The Captain wants to see you."

We filed out, one by one, Skinny pinning his flag over his chest as he went, and soon found ourselves in a big room. Several policemen were standing around and there was a man sitting at a desk.

"Here is the bunch, Captain," said one of them,

as we went in. “We caught them trying to set the old church on fire.”

“Why, they are nothing but boys!” exclaimed the man at the desk.

“Maybe so, but they’d ‘a’ had the old church going if we hadn’t got there just as we did.”

“We wouldn’t do——” Skinny began.

The man waved his hand for him to keep still.

“Now,” said he to the policeman, “tell me exactly what happened.”

“Well, it was this way. There was a blaze in the belfry of the old church on Salem street and somebody turned in an alarm. The firemen broke in the door and found these lads inside, trying to get away. It looked bad; so we brought them over.”

“Boys, what have you got to say for yourselves?” snapped the Captain, turning to us. Then he seemed to see Skinny’s flag for the first time.

“You boy with the flag,” said he. “What is the meaning of all this?”

Skinny looked at us, wetting his lips with his tongue; then sort of braced up and faced the man.

“You dassn’t touch me,” he said, “when that

flag is there, and on the Fourth of July. Even the British wouldn't have done any more to the sexton who hung the lanterns, if they had caught him, than you have done to us. It's treason; that's what it is. You could be hung for it, and maybe you will be when folks find it out.

“They call Boston the ‘Cradle of Liberty,’” he went on, “and nobody here ever hangs up Paul Revere's lanterns on the Fourth of July, or the eighteenth of April. Cradle of fiddlesticks, I say. George Wash——”

He would have said a lot more but a policeman broke in.

“The lad is as crazy as a Junebug, Captain,” he said. “If this man Revere was with them he got away. We didn't see hide nor hair of him, or we'd 'a' brought him along.”

“Easy, easy,” said the Captain, holding up his hand. “Who is this Revere you are talking about and what has he got to do with it?”

“Paul Revere is dead,” began Skinny, looking at him in astonishment. “He was a hero of the Revolution and when the British soldiers started

to march on Lexington and Concord he had a friend hang two signal lanterns in the belfry of the old church, while he waited outside the city on his horse. When he saw the signals he galloped away and pounded on the doors of the farmhouses, telling the people that the British were coming.”

“ I have heard of Paul Revere, of course,” interrupted the Captain, “ but is that any reason why you should try to burn the old church down? ”

“ We didn’t do any such a thing,” cried Skinny, “ and we wouldn’t do it, either. Would we, fellers? We thought we ought to celebrate by hanging two lanterns in the steeple, just like they were hung for Paul Revere that time. We only had one lantern, so we shot off a pinwheel for the other. Folks thought it was a fire but it wasn’t. We were doing it for our country.”

“ So you were just doing the Paul Revere act? ”

“ Yes, sir; the signal part. We didn’t have any horse for the other.”

“ And you think that to bring you down here was treason, punishable by death? ”

“ Well, maybe not quite as bad as that but it was

an awful thing to do, just the same, right here in Paul Revere's own town and where the battle of Bunker Hill was fought. Thirteen of my ancestors were in that battle and one was killed. The police didn't run them in, I guess, when they stood there waiting to see the whites of the enemy's eyes.”

“Yes, sir,” put in Benny, who was beginning to get his courage back for he saw the Captain smiling. “And it's a good thing for the policemen who arrested us that Mr. Michael Flannigan wasn't around, or there would have been something doing.”

“Who is Flannigan?”

“He is a police officer, or something, here in Boston. We fired a salute this morning down by Bunker Hill Monument, on account of Skinny's ancestors. At first Mr. Flannigan thought it was a riot but when he found out what we were doing he told us to go ahead and celebrate all we wanted to. He said he would arrest the first man who tried to stop us, even if it was the mayor.”

“He must mean Mike Flannigan, a new man over in the Charlestown district,” said one of the men.

“Get him on the 'phone,” ordered the Captain.

“Hello,” said he, when they had found him. “Is this Flannigan?”

“Say, Flannigan, some boys have been brought in here, charged with trying to set Christ church on fire. They claim they were only celebrating by placing signals in the belfry like the sexton did for Paul Revere in the days of the Revolution. They say that you told them to go ahead and celebrate all they wanted to and you would arrest the first man that interfered. One young fire-eater wants to have me hung for treason. What do you know about them?”

He listened for a moment, chuckling to himself. We could hear a voice buzzing but couldn't make out the words.

“Say,” he laughed, “let us off this time, Flannigan. I'd hate to be hanged on the Fourth of July.”

He turned to me who stood nearest. “He says there was a man with you this morning. Where is he now?”

“He means Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster,” I

told him. "We are Boy Scouts from the west end of the state and are camping out on Allerton beach. We came up to Boston to celebrate the Fourth because Mr. Norton told us that this was the Cradle of Liberty. He had to go over to a place called Holyoke and is going to meet us tomorrow. He doesn't know about the signal business."

The police captain bored me through with his eyes.

"I think probably you are telling the truth," he said, at last, when he had looked at me so long that I began to get nervous, "but Scouts or no Scouts, you were arrested under very suspicious circumstances and you came dangerously near setting the old church on fire. Where are you boys stopping in Boston?"

"They think we are in bed now," Benny explained, when we had told where the rooming house was. "We climbed down the fire escape."

"I don't like to lock you boys up. If you will promise on your honor as Scouts to report here to me at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, I'll have one

of my men take you back to your rooms for the night.”

We promised and soon were in bed. But it wasn't easy to sleep. Benny, who was with me, kept wondering what his mother would say and what they would do with us in the morning. We all felt the same way. Even after the other boys were quiet and I had dropped off, I dreamed that a big policeman was chasing me and when I awoke I could hear Benny moaning in his sleep.

Mr. Wheeler was surprised next morning when he found out what had happened.

“I heard about the signals last night,” he said, “but had no idea you fellows were kicking up the rumpus. There is only one thing to do—face the music. I'll go with you at ten and help all I can.”

It was exactly ten o'clock when we opened the door into the police office and stood there before the desk with our hats off and giving the Scout salute.

“Here you are,” said the Captain, “prompt to the second, which is good as far as it goes.”

He sat there, looking us over and thinking. "Is this man Mr. Norton?" he asked, finally.

"No," said Mr. Wheeler. "I was sent by the Scout Commissioner to look after these boys during Mr. Norton's absence. I couldn't very well be with them all night but I can assure you, Captain, that they are good boys and that their prank sprang from a patriotic impulse rather than from a desire for mischief. After all, it wasn't a bad idea, to display the Paul Revere signals in the old church on the Fourth of July."

When Mr. Wheeler mentioned the Scout Commissioner, the Captain straightened up and his face cleared as if he had thought what to do.

"So far as the laws of the city are concerned," he told us, "I think you have been punished enough; but you Scouts have laws and officers of your own. What I have decided is this: You must square yourselves with the Boston Scout Commissioner. Wait for your Mr. Norton to come back, if you wish, but square yourselves you must. When the Commissioner telephones me that everything is all

right, then and not until then, you may feel free to go about your own affairs.”

Mr. Norton came back about noon and we told him what we had done and what the police captain had decided about squaring ourselves with the Scout Commissioner.

“You seem to get into some scrape every time I let you out of my sight,” said he. “What is the trouble? I can’t be with you every minute. Skinny, you mustn’t let your patriotism outrun your judgment.”

“We didn’t mean any harm, Mr. Norton, and we didn’t do any harm. It wasn’t our fault, was it, because they saw our pinwheel and thought it was a fire?”

“It seems to have been your misfortune. Well, there is only one thing to do. We’ll go to the Commissioner and make a clean breast of it. The Captain put you upon honor to do that and a Scout’s honor is to be trusted.

Having Mr. Norton with us made it easier but it was hard, just the same. The Commissioner heard our story and then gave us a talking to that

we shall not soon forget. Skinny said afterward that it almost made his hair curl. When he had finished the Commissioner went to a telephone and called up the police captain.

“The boys have been here,” we heard him say, “and I’ll be responsible for their future good conduct.”

“I was intending to take you to Lexington and Concord in a few days,” Mr. Norton told us on the way back to camp. “I want to show you the battle fields and some other points of interest, but maybe it wouldn’t be safe. You might go galloping through the country like Paul Revere did and get arrested for speeding.”

“Guess what!” said Benny. “We haven’t any horse.”

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON

“ALL aboard for Lexington and Concord,” shouted Mr. Norton one day, some time after the things happened that I have been telling about.

We had been enjoying ourselves for a week or more, visiting the museum in the old Boston state-house and other interesting places, and going up and down the shore, seeing all kinds of strange things which cannot be seen around Bob's Hill or Greylock. We never had expected to see seals outside a circus but there were plenty of them down where we were, not at Allerton but over at a place called Pig Rocks. They often came up out of the water to sun themselves on the rocks.

We spent one day in Plymouth where the Pilgrim Fathers landed in 1620, and we saw the rock on which they came ashore. It is back from the water

now. Another time we went up to Nahant, north of Boston, which isn't anything like Allerton or Nantasket. Instead of a sloping, sandy beach, up which waves pour until their force is spent, there are rocks everywhere, piled up in all kinds of shapes and reaching to the water's edge and below. It was great to be there. When the waves rolled in and struck the rocks there was a tremendous pounding and thundering and the spray dashed high in the air.

We had put off our Lexington and Concord trip until later and now the time had come to go.

"Suppose we give ourselves a treat," Mr. Norton had said that morning. "You boys have caught so many fishes and dug so many clams that our funds are holding out better than I expected. How would you like to go to Boston this evening, take in a good show, and stay all night at some hotel? Then we shall be ready for an early start to-morrow. It will do us good to eat some other cooking than our own."

He didn't have to take a vote on that question.

There was great cheering when he had finished and Bill pranced around on his hands and kicked.

"We shall have to hurry if we want to get the next boat at Pemberton," he called again.

We were almost ready and in a few minutes were on a train that we knew would connect with the boat. A little later we went sailing through the green waters of Boston Harbor up to the city, a ride which we never tired of taking.

It rained hard that night after the show. We were worried some, being anxious to have the weather fine next day, but we were snug and dry in the hotel. We boys had double rooms, opening together, with windows looking out on a sort of alley. Mr. Norton's room was across the hall, making it easy for him to come in and talk to us and keep us straight. We sat up a long time with him, talking about the battles of Lexington and Concord.

"Of course, you know about them in a general way," our Scoutmaster told us, "but I think we shall get more out of our trip to-morrow if we jog our memories a little to-night. Who knows what

the fight was about? Skinny, what made Paul Revere's ride necessary?"

"To arouse the Minute Men. He pounded on their doors and yelled, 'The British are coming.'"

"Yes, but why were the British coming? What were they trying to do?"

"Destroy some powder and guns at Concord," said Jim.

"That's it. The colonists had organized twelve thousand men who had agreed to leave their work and fight at a minute's notice. They were called Minute Men. General Gage in Boston had learned that a lot of military supplies, which would be needed in a fight, were being stored at Concord and he made up his mind to destroy them. He accordingly planned the expedition which started the war. His purpose also was to arrest John Hancock and Samuel Adams, two strong patriots who were stirring up feeling against the mother country.

"Gage tried to do this secretly but in some way the colonists found out about it. They didn't know just when the British troops would start or which way they would march. Messengers were needed

to carry the news. Name one of them, Skinny. You may have three guesses."

"Paul Revere!"

"Yes, a patriot named Paul Revere and another named William Dawes were selected as messengers. Don't forget Dawes."

"I never heard of him."

"That is the unfortunate part of it. Dawes did good work that night, just as good as Revere, but he wasn't lucky enough to have a poem written about him and so has been forgotten by most people. Perhaps it was due to his name. The name, Paul Revere, is a whole poem in itself. Dawes was to hurry to Lexington by way of Roxbury and Revere, by way of Charlestown. The signals in the old church were a part of the plan.

"When the eight hundred British soldiers, under Major Pitcairn, reached Lexington common, along after midnight, they found about sixty Minute Men standing there."

"You know what happened well enough," he went on with a smile, for Skinny and Bill were pretending to shoot, "but there is one little thing

you may not know. The colonists didn't want to begin the war. They wanted to act entirely within the law. There was an old English law which said that a townsman had a right to go up and down the king's highway without being molested, as long as he conducted himself properly. If hindered by the king's troops and fired upon, the troops became the aggressors and whoever ordered them to fire became responsible.

"Those men standing on the village green at Lexington were Englishmen and they had a right to be there. They were not disturbing the peace."

"They were loaded, though."

"Yes; their commander, Captain Jonas Parker, had said to them when he saw the troops coming, 'Men, stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon but if they mean war let it begin here.' That placed the responsibility entirely on the king's troops, and the war began right there."

"Major Pitcairn called them rebels and told them to disperse," said Benny. "When they didn't do it he gave the order to fire."

"There you have it. That battle, if it can be

called a battle, was the beginning of a war which in some ways has changed the history of the world and it was begun by the king's troops, not by the colonists."

"How about Concord?" asked Hank.

"Lexington was on the way to Concord and a messenger was sent at once ahead of the troops to tell the people there what had happened at Lexington. The meeting house bell in Concord was rung at two o'clock in the morning, calling out all the inhabitants. One of the first men out with his gun was the preacher, William Emerson, grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the greatest writers America has produced. The fight took place at a bridge but even there the colonists were fired upon three times before they returned the fire.

"The British did what they had set out to do, destroyed the supplies, and started back. Then came the colonists' busy day. By that time the whole countryside was aroused and furious. The soldiers had to run a gauntlet of fire nearly all the way back to Boston. Not one of them would have escaped had not reinforcements come up with can-

non. The British lost 273 men and the Americans, 103. We'll see Lexington Green and Concord bridge to-morrow, if it stops raining. Ralph Waldo Emerson, grandson of the patriot preacher of Concord, wrote a famous poem about that fight at the bridge. It begins this way,

*"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world."*

Bill Wilson didn't think much of it—the poem, I mean, not the battle.

"You couldn't hear a shot around the world," he said. "They don't call it poetry when little Willie says such things."

"Aw g'wan!" exclaimed Skinny. "It doesn't mean to hear with your ears."

"That's what I hear with," Bill told him.

"I am inclined to think," said Mr. Norton, "that if Bill had been there with his justly celebrated yell the words of the poem might be accepted more literally. What the poet meant, however, was that the

results of that battle, which, with Lexington, was the beginning of the Revolutionary War, were felt around the world. That war established the right of the people to govern themselves, as I told you the other day.

“It was not the expense of the taxes imposed by England to which the colonists objected. Those taxes were not burdensome. They paid much larger colonial taxes without a murmur. But here is the point: The English taxes were levied without their consent. They hadn’t anything to say about it. The colonial taxes had been voted by themselves, or their representatives. It made a difference.”

“They didn’t catch Samuel Adams, did they?” some one asked.

“No; thanks to Paul Revere’s warning. When the old patriot heard what had happened on the green at Lexington he exclaimed, ‘O, what a glorious morning!’ He felt that the shedding of American blood, although sad in itself, would bring to the colonies liberty and independence.”

It made us excited to hear so much about battles

and shooting and when we finally went to bed we dreamed it all over again. I did, anyhow. I thought that I was behind a stone wall peppering the British. They made so much noise shooting that I woke up, all of a tremble. Even then they didn't stop shooting but kept right on, making a fearful racket.

I couldn't understand it. I knew that I was not dreaming because I could hear the rain still pouring down outside, but below in the alley the battle kept on. I reached over and awakened Benny who was sleeping with me.

"Do you hear it?" I whispered, "or am I crazy?"

"Shooting!" he gasped. "There's a fight."

Two white forms stole out of the darkness toward our bed. It frightened us for a second, until we saw that they were Skinny and Bill. An instant later the other boys came in from the next room, and still the shooting kept up.

We could see lights being turned on in some of the rooms in the hotel and could hear people talking excitedly. Then Mr. Norton came in, only partly

dressed. He was excited, too. We were glad to see him; it seemed safer.

"I was afraid that you would be frightened, boys," he said, looking out of the window. "It sounds like the battle of Lexington all over again."

"Bang! Bang!" went two shots, almost at the same time, and he jumped away from the window in a hurry.

"What is it?" we asked him.

"I don't know but it sounds very much like a revolver fight down there in the alley. I fear somebody has been murdered, maybe more than one. You boys go back to bed and I'll run down and see what I can find out."

"Bang!" went another shot, after he had left the room.

Hank crawled across the floor on his hands and knees until he reached the window; then lifted his eyes over the sill, trying to see out into the darkness.

"Bang! Bang!" went the fight, sounding so near that he tumbled backward. We thought he had been shot until he came crawling back to us.

"Keep away from the windows, fellers," warned

Skinny. "When they get to shooting they don't care what they shoot at or who they hit."

By this time the whole hotel was awake and we could hear shouting and people running up and down the hall. We huddled together in a corner, out of range from the window, and waited for Mr. Norton.

"Is the fight over? Has anybody been killed?" we asked, as soon as we heard him coming.

"All over," he laughed, "and nobody has been hurt. You couldn't guess in a hundred years what happened, so I'll tell you. Two or three of us dodged around into the alley, keeping out of sight as much as possible. We soon found that there was nobody in the alley excepting ourselves and there were no bodies on the ground. Then, as we looked, there came another volley of shots."

"We heard them. What was it?"

"The affair was very mystifying until we found the cause. I succeeded in arresting one of the fighters myself, single-handed, and here he is."

He held out one hand and showed us an electric light bulb. We couldn't understand it and thought he was fooling.

"Fighter nothin'!——" Skinny began, but Mr. Norton was starting toward the window and we waited to see what he was going to do.

"This is one of the disturbers of the peace," he went on, "although I arrested him before he had done any shooting himself. Listen!"

As he spoke, he tossed the bulb out of the window. There was a moment of silence, then when the bulb had struck the pavement we heard a noise like a pistol shot.

"You see," he explained, for we still were puzzled, "a barrel stands down there under a break in a water pipe. Into that barrel somebody had thrown a lot of used electric light bulbs. These bulbs contain what is called a vacuum; that is, they do not contain anything, the air having been pumped out. They are very light. When water poured into the barrel from the broken pipe, the bulbs floated on top. As the water arose in the barrel, they arose with it, until finally when the barrel was full they began to float over the rim and fall to the pavement. It sounded like the battle of Lexington because as

each one struck it burst with a noise like a pistol shot."

It took a long time to get to sleep after the battle of Lexington but finally we dropped off and when we woke up again it was broad daylight and the sun was shining.

That was a great day, which we never can forget. We were a tired bunch at night when we reached camp again but we had seen 'most everything, Lexington Green, Concord bridge, and all the rest, that before we only had studied about in school.

CHAPTER XVI

A MOUNTAIN HIKE

THE Bob's Hill Boys have done a lot of traveling and have seen a lot of places, some of them pretty fine, but, just the same, we always are glad to start for home. Maybe it is because we are used to our own things that makes us like them. It isn't just Bob's Hill and the cave and things like that. It's everything.

Why, up over the hill there is a field with stone walls around it—a kind of level field but not so very level, either. The boys wouldn't look at it twice out West where we have been and where it is easy to find level spots. That is where we play ball, and we like it. We call it the Eagle Ground. I don't know why, we just call it that.

Old Greylock looks down and watches us play there and seems to like to have us so near.

Plunkett's woods are over to one side, just a bit; and grass all around and blue sky overhead with white clouds playing tag over the mountain top, and crows calling away off somewhere, and maybe a chipmunk running along the top of the wall; and the boys——

Say, if I live to be as old as What's-his-name in the Bible, I know that I'll only have to shut my eyes any time to see the Band climbing Bob's Hill and hear Bill Wilson yelling, "scrub, ins," and the others shouting, "pitch," "catch," "first base," and all the rest until the positions have been filled. And I'll feel my heart swell as we race over the stone wall on to the Eagle Ground and Bill takes his stand at home base with his ball club raised.

My father says that is the way it ought to be. He says it is something which belongs to boyhood; that a boy lives in a little world all his own, where the same things seem different and grown folks can't break in, even if they want to. Maybe so. Anyhow, Skinny doesn't want to grow up because grown folks don't have any fun. He has watched them a lot of times when they were not looking, and so

have I, and all they do is to sit around and talk. There is nothing to it, he says.

"And, fellers," he went on one day, when we were packing up, "I hardly can wait to get home, although we have had fun. Bunker Hill is all right, of course, but Bob's Hill for me every time, when it comes to a steady diet."

"Are we going to walk over the mountain on the way back, like we said we would?" asked Benny.

"You boys can if you want to," Mr. Norton told us, "but I shall go straight through the tunnel. It is time I was getting home."

"Maybe you will be afraid of bears," he went on, winking at me but looking at Skinny. "A number of bears have been seen on the Hoosac range during the past year."

Skinny gave a little snort and started to say something about lassoing a bear once; then changed his mind.

"I eat a bear every morning for breakfast," he said. But that wasn't true, of course. Nobody could do that, not even a big giant.

The boys said that they wanted to climb over the

mountain, bears or no bears, and we left it that way.

"There is a good road over," Mr. Norton explained, "and I don't see how you can get into any trouble by yourselves that you wouldn't get into were I along. The bears, I am sure, will steer clear of Skinny and his rope. If it should come to a show down, I think they would be more scared than you boys. You should be able to get home before dark and it will be good practice for you."

That is how eight boys happened to jump off the train at Hoosac Tunnel station, just before noon one day, and stand waving good-by to Mr. Norton until his train went into the hole in the mountain and out of sight.

The Ravens had been there before and knew what to do. We made for the twin falls, part way up the mountain, above where the tunnel goes in. It looked good to see the falls again, tumbling down from different directions, until they joined at the bottom and dashed off down the hillside toward Deerfield river.

"How about it, fellows," asked Dick, after we

had played there a while, "when are Boy Scouts supposed to eat? It feels like dinner time."

"The book doesn't say," Skinny told him, "but something tells me that we are going to eat right now. Listen, and you'll hear it yourself."

We all stood still, listening. We could hear a squirrel, scolding us from one of the trees, and a crow somewhere up on the mountainside, and the tumbling water.

Skinny shook his head and pointed to the quivering leaves of a big tree. Then we heard it—a low rustling sound in the tree, like bacon frying when you are hungry. It didn't take us long to start a fire and get busy with a noise just like it. There by the mountain brook, at the foot of the falls, we ate a meal that made our packs a great deal lighter to carry.

"Come on," I called, when we couldn't eat any more. "Let's start. We want to get home or, anyhow, strike North Adams before dark, and it is a long climb."

"I can hardly walk," groaned Benny, "I've eaten so much."

We all felt that way but, just the same, we couldn't hang around there all day, and I told them so.

"Gee, Pedro is always wanting to get started," said Skinny. "I'll tell you what, fellers, what's the use of going over to the road? It's a long way over there and when we'd get there we'd be farther from home than when we started. Then we'd have miles to go out of our way, because the road winds so much. We are part way up the mountain right now. What's the matter with going straight up and over from here? It will be easy and we can take our time."

"Are you sure we can get home before dark?" I asked. "It wouldn't be any fun to be caught on the mountain after dark."

"Why not? It isn't anywhere near as far this way as the other. All we'll have to do is to go up until we get to the top and then go down until we get to the bottom."

It sounded good to us, although sort of scary. It is a lot more fun to go tramping and climbing through woods in the shade, playing Indian and

finding all kinds of strange things, than to hike along a hot and dusty road.

• “Guess what,” said Benny; “we’ll be explorers. We can play we are the first white men who ever set foot on the mountain. It will be almost true, too. I don’t believe many folks have climbed up here.”

It didn’t take us long to pack and in a few minutes we were climbing up through the woods, laughing and shouting.

We couldn’t go straight up, of course, because in some places we came to overhanging ledges of rock and at others the underbrush was too thick for us to go through without getting scratched. At such times we made our way around, in one direction or another, twisting about almost as much as the road which we didn’t take. But we had the slope to guide us and it didn’t matter much how far to one side or the other we went as long as we kept going up hill.

We had been climbing that way a long time, two hours maybe, when I saw Skinny slap one hand on his leg and give a groan.

"Water," said he, when we asked him what the matter was. "We forgot to bring any water and I am dying for a drink. We'd ought to have brought a bottle of water from the twin falls. There ain't any water on Greylock and maybe there ain't any on this mountain."

"We didn't have any bottle," I told him.

"We've each got a little one," Bill reminded us; "but there are matches in them to keep 'em dry."

I hadn't been so very thirsty until Skinny told about there not being any water to drink but now I grew thirstier every minute, and it seemed to be the same with the other boys, for they all stopped and gathered around in a bunch to talk it over.

"We've got to find a brook somewhere," Skinny finally decided. "When we find it we can follow it up to the top of the mountain and drink whenever we want to; then strike another going down the other side. What do you say, Jim?"

"That sounds good to me."

"I don't believe we are so very far from one of the brooks that make the twin falls," said Bill. "All we need do is to go north along the side of

the mountain until we come to it. Great snakes! Something is going to happen to the falls when little Willie begins to drink."

"What's the use of going north?" I asked. "Every step we take north will be that much farther from home. No matter if we go four or five miles south we'll be that much nearer the village."

"Pedro," shouted Jim, "you've said it."

"Yes; but we'd have to walk all the way home then," objected Skinny. "We were going to ride down from North Adams."

"Well, we can ride from wherever we come off the mountain. There must be all kinds of brooks. We may find one before we've gone half a mile."

"Why not have Hank cut us some what-you-may-call-'em rods," said Benny, "the kind we used when we found the gold? They point to water the same as to gold."

"There ain't any willow here," Hank told us, "but there is plenty of birch and maybe that will do as well."

After a while we were ready to start again, each with a forked stick in his hands.

"We'd better scatter by twos," said Skinny, "so's to find it quicker, but keep within sound of each other. Yell to beat the band when you find water."

And if anybody gets out of hearing," added Hank, "climb a tree and look for a smoke signal."

"I'll bet a million dollars that I find water first," said Bill, "and when I do there won't have to be any smoke signal. I'll just whisper a few words and you'll hear."

Then we started, Benny and I together, because Mrs. Wade made me promise to keep close to Benny. I guess it is because they live almost across the street from us. Skinny and Dick went together, both being patrol leaders. Jim, patrol leader of the Eagles, went with Hank. Bill Wilson, assistant patrol leader of the Ravens, went with Frank Barker, assistant patrol leader of the Tigers.

It was such fun that we forgot about being thirsty. Benny and I found a big patch of raspberries and they were almost as good as water.

"Maybe we'd better call the other boys on account of the berries," I said, after we had filled up on them.

But we knew that we ought to be hurrying along and that they probably would find plenty of berries for themselves. Besides, every minute we expected to hear Bill, or somebody, yell. We thought we did hear him once and started in that direction, holding our divining rods but not thinking much about them. Finally, Benny gave a start and shouted in an excited voice,

“Pedro, look at my divining rod.”

I looked, and you needn't believe me if you don't want to, but it was pointing almost straight up into the air. At the same instant there was a crash of thunder and a black cloud blotted out the sun.

“It's going to rain,” said Benny. “The divining rod knows; it always points to water. We'll get all wet.”

“Look for a cave,” I told him. “Come on; beat it.”

We hurried along as fast as we could, and as we ran it grew darker and darker until we hardly could see, in the woods that way. The wind arose and tore through the branches until we thought the trees would come down on us, and the thunder roared

and crashed until we hardly could make each other hear, and we were scared nearly out of our wits.

I grabbed Benny by one hand, so that we could keep together, and we struggled on, looking for some kind of shelter.

Then the rain came.

Say, that divining rod knew what it was about. It pointed to water, all right. We found all the water we needed in about two seconds. It came down in blinding sheets and pailfuls, which wet us to the skin and made the ground slippery where we walked.

Finally, by the glare of a lightning flash we saw a big rock ahead of us and I drew Benny down on the windward side of that. It overhung us a little and kept off some of the rain.

There we crouched for I don't know how long. It seemed forever. All that time the flood came down; the thunder roared, and, now this way and now that, we could hear the crash of some falling tree. It was awful.

The rain stopped as suddenly as it had come. The wind went down and we could see blue sky.

when we looked up through the trees. The crash of thunder died away to rumblings and mutterings from far down the valley of Deerfield river.

We stood up, stretched ourselves and tried to wring some of the water out of our clothes. The first thing to do was to find the boys. Benny and I yelled for all we were worth and then listened but not a sound could we hear in answer. It was as if we were the first white folks who ever set foot on the mountain, as Benny had wanted to play.

When we found that we couldn't make them hear and couldn't hear even Bill, I looked for a tree that I could climb, and shinned up until I could reach the branches; then climbed as high as I dared and looked for a smoke signal. I couldn't get above all the other trees but was far above the underbrush and above some of the trees. Not a trace of smoke could I see in any direction.

"They are lost," I said, on coming down to the ground. "We'll have to go on without them."

"Guess what," said Benny, trying to smile but looking a little scared. "Maybe we are the ones that are lost."

"We'd better send up a smoke signal; perhaps they will see it. A fire will help us to get dry, anyhow. It's lucky our matches are in bottles where they couldn't get wet."

After a little search I found a hollow tree and, reaching in, pulled off pieces of rotted wood from the inside, which was as dry as tinder. We soon had a blaze started and after it was going in good shape we threw on dead branches which had been blown down by the wind. They were wet but the fire was hot enough to dry them until they caught.

While the smoke made its way up through the trees, we hung our coats on sticks before the blaze and stood around in the heat to dry our clothes.

It made us feel better to get warm and dry but not a sign of the other boys could we see or hear, although I climbed another tree to look and we nearly yelled our heads off.

"The thing for us to do," I said, finally, "is to get home as soon as we can, unless we want to stay all night on the mountain. The other boys will do the same. They are Scouts and able to take care of themselves."

By that time the sun had gone down back of the mountain. We knew that it must be shining on the valley where we lived but now we were in the shadow.

"We are explorers, all right, Benny," I told him, after we had been walking an hour or more without getting anywhere, "but you can search me if I know where we are going. I think we are somewhere near the top of the mountain. It's lightest over that way but I don't know whether it is because that way is west or because the woods are thinner in that direction. Look for moss on the north side of the tree trunks. Maybe we can tell by that."

We finally decided by the moss which way was north and then went to the left. It was a different direction from what we had been going. We tramped for another hour and seemed to be on top of the mountain. It was no longer so hard to climb but was up and down and in places almost level. There was no telling how far it was across to the west slope, or whether we'd get there if we tried. It didn't look good to me.

"Benny," I said at last, after thinking it over, "would you be afraid to stay alone with me all night on the mountain?"

He grabbed hold of my hand as if the thought kind of scared him. Then his face lighted up with a smile.

"I've got a First Class Scout badge, haven't I?"

"You bet you have," I told him, "and you were out all alone the night we had our test hike but that wasn't on top of a mountain with nobody within miles of us. It's this way. We can see now but by the time we could get across the top of the mountain it would be dark. It wouldn't be safe to climb down the mountain after dark, Benny."

"I know it," he said, still holding on to my hand. "I've been thinking of that for some time."

"Then what's the answer?"

"Find a good place to camp while we still can see."

"Guessed it the first thing," I told him, trying hard to be cheerful, but all the time I was thinking of what Mr. Norton had said about there being bears on the east mountain.

"Mother will be scared half to death when I don't get home. Mr. Norton was going to tell her that I'd be along about supper time."

"I know it. So will mine. That's the worst part of it but we can't help it. They wouldn't want us to climb down after dark. We ought to have gone by the road; we'd be in North Adams now if we had. Anyhow, we'll not have to go hungry. There is bacon enough left for supper, and more, too, and we can find some berries, unless the rain has beaten them all off. I guess the bread is pretty well soaked."

We couldn't find a cave anywhere, so we picked out a spot that was sheltered by bushes. The ground was too wet to lie on but we knew how to get around that. We built a big fire, as we had done before; then we cooked and ate our supper.

"We'd better keep a fire going all night," I decided, "to scare away the bears and that will take a lot of wood."

Each of us had a Boy Scout hatchet and I had noticed a dead tree blown down a little way back. It didn't take long to gather a big pile of brush

which would burn when thrown on a hot fire, even if it was wet.

Finally, we raked the fire over to one side from where we had kindled it and swept the place clean of ashes with brooms made from branches of trees. As soon as the ground had cooled off a little we had a fine place to sleep, dry and warm, although there was no roof overhead.

Benny and I lay and talked a long time, wondering where the other boys were and whether our folks had begun to get scared. Whenever the fire died down one of us threw on some more brush. Overhead the stars were shining bright and we pointed out the Great Dipper to each other, following along the edge of the bowl with our eyes until we found the North star.

When he saw that star, Benny grabbed his hatchet and cut a notch on the north side of a near-by tree.

"It may be cloudy to-morrow," he said. "We'll know which way to start, anyhow."

The last I remembered, after throwing some more brush on the fire, was seeing Benny sound asleep with his coat for a pillow, and thinking that it would

be up to me to keep watch. But I must have gone to sleep in spite of myself, being pretty tired, for along in the night, it seemed, I awoke with a start.

The fire had partly died down but it blazed up again when I threw on some more brush. It wasn't the dark that scared me. It was the noise of some animals crashing through the bushes toward us.

"Benny," I whispered. "Wake up. Bears!"

CHAPTER XVII

MIDNIGHT ALARMS

IT is scary business to wake up on a mountain top and hear bears coming after you. Benny didn't awaken soon enough to suit me but when I shook him he sat up startled, not knowing where he was at first. Then he heard it, nearer now, and still coming toward us.

"There are two of them," he whispered, after listening a minute. "Come on; let's get out of this."

We circled around without making a sound, until we found a good tree to climb. I boosted Benny up among the branches and managed to climb up myself with his help. Then we waited. We could see our fire but the noise of the bears had stopped.

For a minute we thought they had gone; then I saw them. They were stealing up toward the fire, keeping in the shadows all they could and careful

not to make any noise. I grabbed Benny by the arm and pointed, and we drew closer together on the branch, ready to climb higher if we had to.

"They'll get our bacon," I whispered, "and we won't have any breakfast but we are safe here."

He didn't say a word only sat there straddling a limb and staring out toward the fire, where we could see the two shadows stealing toward it. Finally, as one of the bears raised himself on his hind legs, Benny gave a little grunt of surprise and, before I could stop him, hung from the limb with his hands and then dropped to the ground, calling as he went,

"Skinny! Skinny!"

Would you believe it? The animals were not bears at all but Skinny and Dick Elmore. They had climbed a tree and seen our fire; then started for it, careful not to make any noise when they drew near, until they could find out who it was. When they found a fire burning and nobody around they didn't know what to make of it.

They hadn't seen the other boys at all since we started out after water, and were as glad to find us as we were to see them.

“And betcher life you are all right now,” said Skinny, when we were getting ready to go to sleep again. “I’ve got my rope along.”

We didn’t know anything more until sunshine from the east side of the mountain, slanting through the trees, woke us up in the morning. There were some red hot coals left among the ashes of our fire and Benny and I were getting ready to cook the rest of the bacon, when Skinny opened his eyes.

“Wait,” he called. “We haven’t any water to drink and bacon will make us thirsty.”

“Anyhow, we’ve got to eat,” I told him, “and bacon is all we have except birch bark. We can eat first and look for a drink afterward.”

“Dick and I found a dandy spring, didn’t we, Dick? Let’s wait until we get to it before we eat. It won’t take long.”

“Do you know where to look for it again?”

“Do we? Betcher life we do. We made a trail through the underbrush last night that you could follow in your sleep.”

“Well, come on, then; and hurry. Benny and I

are starving. Let's take some of this dry wood along."

We followed the trail without much trouble and were surprised when, after a time, it led down the mountain on the west side. Benny and I had crossed the top without knowing it, the night before, and had camped not far from the west slope.

"Hurrah!" yelled Benny. "We are all right now. All we have to do is to keep on going down hill until we come to the bottom and then we'll be 'most home."

"Where is your old spring?" I asked, finally, after we had been walking what seemed a long time and were growing hungrier and thirstier every minute.

Skinny stopped just then and held up one hand for us to keep quiet. He listened a minute, watching for the enemy; then dropped to his hands and knees and crawled down through some bushes. A few minutes later we heard him cawing like a crow, and hurried to join him.

We came out into a sort of clearing where Skinny

stood pointing to a little pool of water which came from the rocks and then hurried off down the mountain.

Benny and I didn't stop to look at any spring. Far below, still in the shadow of East Mountain, although where we stood the sun was shining, lay the valley where we live. We could see Hoosic River, like a ribbon of silver, and the houses in our village and at the Gingham Ground. Across the valley beyond, holding his head high above us and seeming to laugh at us because we had been lost and scared, was old Greylock.

After that you couldn't have scared us with a gun. Nothing bothered any more—the rain, the bears, the night on the mountain top, or anything. We had wandered so far south that we had come to a point almost opposite Bob's Hill. A fellow can't get lost or scared, can he, when he can look down and see his own home?

We stood there yelling like Indians for several minutes; then lay down by the cool water, drank our fill, and washed our faces and hands.

“Now bring on your bacon, Pedro,” said Skinny,

“and hurry, or I’ll have to catch a bear for breakfast.”

It is great, eating breakfast on the mountain that way, by the side of a spring of cool water, almost in sight of the kitchen woodbox at home and knowing that you don’t have to fill it, or anything.

While we ate, Skinny and Dick told about finding the spring and the camp which Benny and I had made. When we all started to look for water the afternoon before, Skinny and Dick had gone straight up the mountain before circling off toward the south. After a while they heard a noise in some bushes and thought it was a bear, and maybe it was.

“Didn’t you have your rope along, Skinny?” Benny asked.

“You can’t lasso a bear, unless you can climb a tree above him and drop the lasso down around his neck, like I did that time on the mountain above Pun’kin Hook. There wasn’t any tree where that bear was, only bushes.”

They were in such a hurry that they lost their divining rods and didn’t care which way they ran

or whether they found any water or not. Then, after it seemed as if they had gone miles, the storm came.

"Gee-whillikins, that was some rain!" said Skinny, "like it was when we came down the face of Greylock that time."

"But it never touched us," added Dick. "We found a big, hollow tree and squeezed into that."

After the rain was over they tried to make the rest of us hear and sent up smoke signals just as we did but it didn't do any good.

"You are a nice bunch of fellers," said Skinny, "to go and get yourselves lost. We couldn't find you anywhere until night."

They wandered on until, finally, when it was growing dark, they began to go down hill and, pretty soon, found the spring and could see the lights of the village shining far below, where it was darker than on the mountain. Then they made up their minds to camp where they were, for they might have broken their legs or necks trying to climb down the mountainside after dark. They built a fire, just as

we did, and, after the ground was dry, lay down and went to sleep.

“How did you happen to find us last night?” I asked, “if you went to sleep in your own camp?”

Skinny didn't like to tell how that happened but we kept asking him and finally he owned up that they had been scared by a big lot of bears coming toward them from down the mountain.

“And believe me!” he went on, “there is a time to run and a time to be brave, and that was a time to run. We only had one lasso and it was too dark to do any lassoing, anyhow.”

They ran up the mountain as fast as they could and then climbed a tree to wait and listen. From that tree they saw our fire away off through the woods, and after making sure the bears were not following, they made their way toward it.

“And it's lucky for you that we found you when we did,” added Skinny, “or you would have had to eat breakfast without any water to drink.”

“Where do you suppose Bill and the rest of the bunch are?” I asked.

"Search me. They are lost somewhere on the mountain, probably."

"I'll tell you what," I said. "Something may have happened to them. Bill may have sprained his ankle again."

"Or they may have been chased up a tree by a bear," put in Benny.

"Anyhow, we ought to hunt for them before going home, for fear they may be in trouble."

"All right," said Skinny, "but first let's hunt for berries. I haven't had quite enough to eat and berries make good eating in the morning."

East Mountain is a great place for berries. We probably would have run across some pickers, even that early in the morning, if it hadn't been for the rain. We soon found some berries, although the storm had beaten off the ripest ones.

After we had filled up we scattered to look for a trail. With the sun shining and the trees throwing shadows toward the west, there wasn't any danger of getting lost. Just the same, we kept within shouting distance of each other. I don't know how

long we had been hunting when we heard Benny yell,

“I’ve found ’em! I’ve found ’em!”

We hurried over to where he was standing.

“Where are they?” we asked.

“I don’t know where they are,” said he, “but I know which way they went.”

He pointed to a big tree as he spoke. The bark had been smoothed off with a hatchet and some one had drawn an arrow with blue chalk on the place. There was a picture of a crow, to show that somebody from Raven patrol had been that way, only it didn’t look much like a crow.

“It’s meant for a crow,” said Benny. “It’s a bird, all right.”

“It might be an eagle,” I told him. “Jim is with them and he is an Eagle.”

“It’s Bill,” decided Skinny. “He had a piece of blue chalk with him. I saw it yesterday.”

We could tell what had happened as well as if we had been there. After it had stopped raining and Bill had tried to make us hear and couldn’t, he did

the next best thing—drew an arrow to show which way they had gone.

“Their tracks ought to be around here somewhere,” I said, “if they came this way since the rain.”

After a little search we came to a clear place which was muddy, and there were their tracks plain.

“Four of them,” shouted Benny. “They are all together.”

Some distance beyond, Skinny, who was on ahead, called to us and pointed to two stones on the ground, a small one on top of a larger one. That is an Indian sign for “this is the trail.” Later we found chalk marks on the tree trunks and once in a while, an arrow, and were able to follow fast.

“Good, old Bill,” said Skinny. “He knew that we would try to rescue him; but what was the sense of their chasing around in a circle? If they had gone straight they would have come out on the west slope.”

“Here is where they camped,” shouted Dick, after a few minutes, “or sent up a smoke signal.”

“Yes, this was their camp,” said Skinny, after

looking around. "I can almost smell the bacon frying. They are probably at home by this time. They could tell by the sun which way to go. You'll see. They made a bee line for home after breakfast, and that is what we'd better be doing."

But instead of going west the trail broke up into several trails all going in different directions and circling around everywhere. We couldn't understand it at first; then it came to me what they were doing.

"The boobs are looking for us," I said.

Skinny was disgusted. "Looking for us!" he shouted. "We ain't lost, are we? They are the ones that are lost. Betcher life you couldn't lose me on East Mountain."

Just then we heard an awful screech but far away, back along the trail we had been following, and stopped, scared for a minute.

"It's a wild cat," whispered Benny. "They make noises like that. They are on our track and there ain't any use in climbing a tree when wild cats are after you."

Soon the sound came again, a little nearer—a

terrible screech, like a dog fight, ending in a long wail.

“It’s Bill,” we shouted.

It was as plain as day in a minute. We had been following their trail, trying to find them, and they had been following our trail, trying to find us, each party chasing around and around until at last we came near enough together to hear.

“Caw! Caw-caw!” yelled Skinny.

We all took up the cry, even Dick who belonged to Tiger patrol and ought to have growled. There was a big racket for a few minutes; then we listened. From far down the trail came the answer,

“Caw! Caw-caw!” Then another of Bill’s yells.

Without a word we started on a run back toward the sound, cawing every few minutes and stopping to listen.

We saw them at last through the trees, as they crossed a clearing, and in another five minutes we stood facing each other and grinning.

“Great snakes!” said Bill. “You fellows ought to wear a bell. You’ve led us a great chase. If you had to go and get lost why didn’t you wait

where you were, like the book says, until we could find you?"

"Lost nothin'!" Skinny told him. "We'd be home eating dinner now if we hadn't stopped to hunt for you. Where have you been, anyhow? You'd ought to have been with us last night; we came near surrounding a lot of bears."

CHAPTER XVIII

TWO SMOKES ON EAST MOUNTAIN

IT made us all feel better to be together once more, with the sun shining and birds singing in the trees. We had forgotten all about being scared in the night. Somehow things seem different in the night time and a fellow gets scared easily.

After a good drink at the spring, we decided to go straight down the mountain toward home, stopping to eat berries on the way. We were hungry and had eaten everything in sight.

"My mother will be having a fit about this time," said Benny, as we sat around the spring, looking down into the valley. "Just as soon as I have eaten some berries I am going to put for home as fast as my legs can carry me."

I had been thinking the same thing. Before we left the train, the day before, we asked Mr. Norton to be sure to tell our folks that we were on the way

and would get home in time for supper. We thought that if they knew we were coming they would cook up something good to eat and a lot of it. He told us that he might not be able to get word to Jim's folks at the Gingham Ground but he would tell the others. Here it was dinner time the next day and we still were a long way from home.

"I'll bet they are hunting for us this very minute," said Skinny. "Folks always seem to think that a feller is in trouble when he doesn't show up at meal time. Why, look at us! Nothing ever happened to us. We can take care of ourselves, I guess."

"Something happened to Bill once," Benny told him. "Don't you remember how he sprained his ankle on Greylock?"

"Well, we found him, didn't we? His ankle got well, didn't it? How about it, Bill? Did your ankle get well?"

For answer Bill found a level place and stood on his hands, waving his ankles around in the air.

"I wish I had our field glass here," I said. "I'll bet I could see my mother standing at the front door

down in Park Street, looking for her lost child. She almost could see me if she had the glass and would go up on Bob's Hill."

"Why not send up a smoke signal?" asked Jim,—"two smokes, like the Apache Indians do to show that they are safe? I 'read it in a book,' Skinny," he added. "The Boy Scout Manual says so, too."

"What's the use?" said Bill. "Our folks don't know how to read Scout signals or Injun signs, and the boys that do have gone away."

"The Eagles haven't gone and they know how. They haven't had as much practice as the Ravens but they are pretty good at it, just the same."

"The Eagles won't be looking for signals. Mr. Norton wasn't going to get word to Jim's mother, so they won't know anything about it."

"Guess what," put in Benny, when Bill said that. "Mr. Norton knows all about signals and he is at home. He can read signs better than anybody. I'll bet he is wondering where we are about this time."

We built two big fires, a little way apart, and when they were burning we threw on a lot of wet

leaves. Two columns of smoke went straight up in the air and they meant that we were all right. One column of smoke ought to have been sent up first, meaning "Attention," but we didn't have time for that.

We didn't wait for an answer but started down the mountainside, looking for berries and keeping close to a little stream which came from the spring, so that we could drink when thirsty. There wasn't any danger of the fire spreading after such a storm.

Of course we didn't know what our folks were saying and doing until afterward but that part belongs here and the boys told me to put it in, so I'll do it just as if we had known about it all the time.

Mr. Norton's train from North Adams reached our village a little after noon. The depot is right back of Benny Wade's house and only a little farther from ours, so it was easy for him to stop and tell our folks when to look for us.

"Is it safe for them to come over the mountain alone?" Mrs. Wade asked.

"Safe? Why not? The old stage road is still

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traveled more or less and it will lead them straight into North Adams. On top of the mountain is the little town of Florida, which they will have to pass through. On the east and west slopes there are several farmhouses. The boys have food and matches and at no time will they be far from water. They know how to take care of themselves, too; at least, those do who have had Scout training. They couldn't get lost, Mrs. Wade, if they tried, or, anyhow, unless they tried pretty hard."

"It would be terrible to have anything happen to Benny."

"Nothing will happen, Mrs. Wade. I shouldn't have said anything about it had I thought that you would worry and I shouldn't have let them walk had I thought there was a particle of danger. You'd better cook an extra supply of food for supper. There will be a hungry boy along about the time you get ready to sit down."

Mrs. Wade always gets scared before anybody else does; she thinks a lot of Benny. My mother didn't care.

"We'll be glad to have the boys at home once

more," said she. "It has been a great experience for them. I wasn't intending to bake until tomorrow, but if John is coming to-night his mother will have to get busy. He will bring a big appetite with him. Some of the others may stop here on the way and I must have some doughnuts ready for them."

"I think that you and your doughnuts have more influence over the boys than I have, Mrs. Smith."

"Don't you believe it. Your friendship and training are the best things that ever happened to those boys. They have been a help to me, too. I used to worry whenever John was out of my sight for fear that something would happen to him but I have learned, as he says, that a boy doesn't want to get hurt any more than his people want him to, and that, ordinarily, he can take care of himself pretty well. Still, I sometimes think that a Divine Providence must watch over boys especially, or they never would live to grow up."

Mr. Norton went home to dinner and after sending word to Skinny's house and asking Mrs. Miller

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to tell the others, he went about his work and forgot all about us.

He didn't think of us again until about five o'clock when the big rain came, and he didn't worry then because he felt sure that we were hiking into North Adams about that time, or, anyhow, that we'd have seen the storm coming soon enough to get to a farmhouse or some other shelter.

Being tired, he went to bed early that night and was sound asleep when a great banging on the door woke him up. It was my father and some of the other fathers, and what they said scared him.

"Mr. Norton," they called, "not one of those boys has come home."

Our Scoutmaster slipped on some of his clothes and opened the door. "Not home!" he exclaimed. "I don't see how it is possible."

"It is not only possible but too true," father told him. "What do you suppose could have delayed them?"

"It might have been the rain. You probably noticed that the storm was heavier over toward Florida mountain. Perhaps they fooled around too

long on the other side of the range before starting; then stopped at Florida during the storm. In that case they couldn't get home much before ten o'clock. What time is it now?"

"About nine thirty."

"Have you heard from all of the homes?"

"All except Donavan's at the Gingham Ground."

"They probably will come in pretty soon but in the meantime I'll go down to the Gingham Ground and find out if anybody there has heard from Jim. The boys may have stopped there to play on the way back, although that is not very probable."

"I'll go with you," said father. "I have my horse here."

About that time, or soon after, Benny and I, scared half out of our wits, were shinning up a tree to get away from bears, on top of East Mountain, so we couldn't very well have been at the Gingham Ground.

After finding out that we hadn't been there, they drove back home and waited until midnight. Then, when we hadn't shown up, everybody was frantic.

"I can't understand it. I can't understand it,"

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Mr. Norton kept saying. "There couldn't anything have happened to them on the road. If anything had happened, it would not have happened to all of them at once. The others would have brought word. The only explanation that I can think of is that somebody induced them to stay all night in Florida. The rain must have been almost a cloudburst there and a flood of water would have poured down the mountain road. It would have been very unwise to start down the mountain from Florida, knowing that they wouldn't be able to get to North Adams before dark."

That sounded so reasonable that Mr. Norton almost believed it himself.

"It will begin to grow light in a little more than three hours," said father, finally. "I propose to start for Florida the minute I can see the road and I'd like to have you go with me, Mr. Norton, if you will."

"I shall go, of course. I know just how anxious you feel. I can't help being anxious myself but, depend upon it, those boys are all right. Boys are thoughtless often. They do not stop to think of

the anxiety they are causing their parents, and these boys are no better in that respect than others, but there is not a streak of yellow in one of them. They never got into a difficulty yet that they were not able to work out of.

“You remember how it was when young Wilson sprained his ankle on Greylock mountain, where nobody even knew that he had thought of going. That was a test of courage and resourcefulness. There was reason for anxiety then but the boys solved the problem themselves when we elders were helpless.

“Think back over your own life, Mr. Smith. Suppose that you had started to walk over Florida Mountain, with several other boys, when you were their age. Wouldn't you have been able to take care of yourself all right? And if for some reason you had not been able to reach home that night, would it have been such a terrible thing, so far as you were concerned?”

“I did it once,” chuckled father, sort of smiling to himself when he remembered it. “I'll tell you what's a fact. If I thought my boy was doing half

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the reckless things I did at his age, I should be crazy most of the time. Do you suppose they could have had any trouble with a bear?"

Mr. Norton laughed. "Which do you think would be the most badly frightened should they meet one, the bear or the boys?"

Just the same, they worried themselves almost sick over us and as soon as it began to grow light they hitched up the horse and started.

After they had begun to climb the mountain they stopped at every house to inquire. Nobody had seen eight Boy Scouts going down the road, making a lot of noise.

"There hasn't a person been down this road since the rain," said Mr. Norton, after they had stopped at the last house. "It is easy to see that without asking. Eight boys would have left a lot of tracks. It is as I told you; they stopped all night in Florida."

At last they drove into Florida, half expecting they would meet us on the way. When they found that we had not been there at all and that nobody had seen or heard anything of us, they didn't know what to make of it or what to do.

"It is certain that they didn't come up the road," Mr. Norton declared, after they had eaten some breakfast and were planning what to do next.

"Eight strange boys could not pass through Florida without every man, woman, child, and dog knowing about it. If they came at all, they came some other way. But what way and where are they now?"

"Just where did you leave them?"

"They got off the train at Hoosac Tunnel station which, as you know, is a short walk from the mouth of the tunnel, on the east side of the mountain. Come to think about it, they had been planning to climb up above the tunnel to visit a waterfall which is there, and eat their dinner. Do you suppose they could have started over the mountain from there instead of taking the road? If they did, they would have been exposed to the full force of the storm, unless they found some woodchopper's hut, or other shelter."

"Mr. Smith," he went on, excitedly, "if those boys did that and then lost their way, or were detained from any cause until nearly dark, they would not have tried to get home last night. It would not

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have been safe to climb down the mountain after dark, especially when there had been such a storm. They would have built a fire and made themselves as comfortable as possible where they were. That is what you or I would have done. It is what I have taught them to do."

"In that case," said father, "unless we hurry back they will get home before we do."

"We may overtake them. If they climbed straight over they would come down off the mountain near the west portal of the tunnel, about five miles from home."

About noon they reached our house again but they hadn't overtaken us and they hadn't seen any signs of us, although they kept a sharp lookout.

"We'll get a search party together and comb the whole mountain," said father, finally, looking pale and sick he was so worried. "Don't say anything to the women folks about it but there is only one way to account for the absence of all of them. It was a terrible storm; they must have been struck by lightning and either stunned, or killed."

Just as he said that, mother came tearing through

the room like a house afire, knocking chairs right and left in her hurry. She grabbed the field glass and was gone again before anyone had time to ask questions. A moment later they heard her calling excitedly from upstairs,

“Father! Mr. Norton! Come quick!”

They were on the way before she called, to find out what had happened. Now they took the stairs two steps at a time. She was standing at one of the east windows, looking through the field glass toward East Mountain, and her cheeks were as red as Skinny's. Father ran to her but Mr. Norton reached the other window in two jumps and without a glass saw what she was looking at.

“A smoke signal!” he shouted. “Two smokes! They are safe! It is an Indian sign which I taught them.”

When he turned to take the field glass they handed to him, there were tears in his eyes, which makes us think that he was more worried than he let on. Mother was laughing and crying at the same time.

“Please send the news to Mrs. Wade,” he said.

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“The poor woman is nearly crazed with anxiety. I’d better wait here at the window for a while. The boys may be sending a message.”

But that was all they saw, two columns of smoke. It meant everything to them, however, for they felt sure it must be a signal from us, and it was not a signal of distress.

CHAPTER XIX

SKINNY MEETS A BEAR

WHILE those things were happening, told about in the last chapter, we boys were on the way down the mountain. After starting the smoke signal, we left the fires burning and went on without waiting. Of course, we fixed the fires so that they would not spread, although there wasn't much danger of that after the rain.

We took our time climbing down through the woods and clearings, for we were not hungry, having filled up on berries, and we knew exactly where we were. We didn't know just where we'd come out of the woods into the valley, but we knew that we'd come out somewhere. Every time we came to a clearing we could see the village down below; Greylock over across, and the woods where our cave is, with Peck's Falls always roaring down the cliff. There was no chance to get lost. It was

great, playing Indian on the mountainside, or explorers, discovering a new country. Skinny with his rope had more fun than anybody. Every time we came to a stump he would yell "Injuns" or "buffalo" and lasso it, while the rest of us lined up with sticks for guns and charged. Finally, when we were halfway down we heard him yell,

"Big Injun hungry! Lasso bear for supper!"

"Do you see one, Skinny?" we called.

"No, but I wish I did. I'll tell you what, fellers, we've got to lasso a bear and take him home. The folks will be surprised some when we show up, leading a bear. They'll forget to scold us maybe."

"How are we going to find any?" I asked. "We haven't seen one yet."

"We make too much noise; that's the reason. Bill is enough to scare all the game on the mountain."

"I don't make any more noise than you do," said Bill.

"Any noise at all, is too much when you are hunting bears. I'll tell you what let's do. Let's scatter and make a still hunt. The first one who

hears anything that sounds like a bear must give one caw like a crow. Only one, remember; we don't want to scare him; and, fellers, make it sound like a crow, only not too loud or we'll lose him. When the rest of us hear the signal we'll creep up and surround him and I'll get busy with my lasso."

This lassoing-a-bear business didn't sound good to me. "We couldn't hold him, after he was lassoed," I said. "Bears are strong and sometimes they are fierce."

"Don't be afraid, Pedro. It will be easy. Just wind your rope around a tree and you've got him. That's the way I did that time I lassoed a bear before."

"I ain't afraid any more than you are," I told him. "If there are any bears around here I'm the one that's going to find them but you can do the lassoing part."

We crept through the bushes in different directions but always down hill and with hardly a sound. Benny stood up once and waved to me, so that I'd know that he was keeping close. It made me feel better because, no matter what you say, bears are

bears, and I shouldn't like to meet one, all alone in the woods.

This not being afraid, it seems to me, is mostly bluff, anyhow. It is not letting being afraid make any difference that counts. Now, there is Skinny, our patrol leader. I never saw anybody get more scared. But it doesn't make any difference how frightened he is, he grits his teeth and goes ahead, if that is the right thing to do, until he gets mad; then he's a whirlwind.

After we had been creeping through the underbrush quite a while, Benny and I came to a berry patch and stopped to eat some more berries. We were just wondering where the other boys were when Benny gave a start and grabbed me by one arm.

"Sh-h-h! I think there's a bear over in those bushes," he whispered.

I listened; then looked around to see where there was a tree that we could climb, if we should want to real badly. As soon as I had found one I motioned for Benny to follow and we crawled toward the sound.

"We must be sure," I breathed into his ear. "We mustn't make any mistake or they will laugh at us. Keep on the windward side and don't make any noise."

He nodded and, inch by inch, we crept closer, without snapping a stick more than two or three times. Whatever it was, we didn't hear it again and we couldn't find any bear, although we could tell that something had been there, when we finally dared go into the thicket.

The other boys didn't have any better luck, and after a little we gave it up and started down the mountain again. By this time several other tiny streams had been flowing into our brook and it began to be pretty good sized and to rush and roar over the rocks in great shape. We didn't know for sure but we thought it might be Tophet brook, which flows down and forms the Basin where we go swimming.

Finally, we came to a place where the water formed a pool before pouring over a rocky ledge. When he saw the pool, Bill gave a whoop and held up two fingers, which meant swimming. The pool

wasn't large enough to swim in but the water came up above our knees; it was cool and wet and we were hot and kind of tired.

It didn't take long for us to get out of our clothes and into the water. We splashed and fooled around for I don't know how long, part of the time in the pool and part of the time lying around in the shade and plastering mud over ourselves.

"Let's go in once more, fellers," said Skinny, "and wash the mud off. We'll have to be starting for home pretty soon."

He splashed into the water; then we heard him give a terrible yell as he came bounding out.

"Run!" he shouted.

It wasn't much to say but it was enough, and he didn't have any more time.

I gave one look as we scrambled to our feet and started. What I saw was enough for me and I passed Skinny in two seconds, although he was doing his best.

A big bear stood on the other side of the pool, sniffing at our clothes and at Skinny's rope. It

seemed to surprise him to see a boy without anything on. He couldn't make out what kind of animal it was.

If anybody ever asks you to run a race on a mountainside, with bare feet and nothing on except mud, don't you do it. Sticks and stones on the ground cut our feet; bushes and low hanging branches tore our skin until it bled, as we passed, but we didn't notice that at first. We had something more important to think about.

Pretty soon I found what I had been looking for—a tree that I could climb. Shouting to the other boys, I jumped for the nearest branch and, digging my knees into the bark, pulled myself up into the crotch. Then I noticed blood running down my legs through the mud, where the skin had been torn off by the bark. I was safe, anyhow. In less than half a minute the other boys were either in my tree or some other.

We waited a long time, listening, but couldn't hear anything that sounded like a bear.

"He ain't a-follering," called Skinny, at last. "We scared him, I guess. Let's go back after our

clothes. It's a good thing for him that I couldn't get at my rope."

Then we crept back, keeping close together and stopping every minute to watch and listen. When we had come to where we knew the pool was, back of some bushes, Jim spoke up.

"Maybe Bill had better holler," said he. "If the bear is there it will scare him. Bill's holler would scare anything."

"Let's all yell," Bill told us, but we could see that what Jim said made him feel proud.

We made a terrible racket and after waiting a moment crept forward until we could peer around the bushes and see the pool. The bear had gone and our clothes lay there where we had thrown them down.

After we had washed off the mud and dressed we felt better and it didn't seem so scary. Bill grabbed a club and jumped into the air with a screech, cracking his heels together as he came down.

"Show him to me," he yelled. "Where is the critter?"

Skinny grabbed his rope and swung it around his head.

"If he hadn't stood where I couldn't get at my lasso," he complained, "I could have done something. But what's the use when you haven't got any clothes on, or your rope, or anything? The thing to do now is to track him. We'll follow him to the ends of the earth. No measly bear is going to chase Gory Gabe and his Band and get away with it."

"That's the stuff," cried Bill, and we all cheered.

Away we went, crashing through the underbrush and trying to find signs of the bear. Two or three times we thought we saw his footprints in some soft place but we couldn't track him.

"Hark!" said Skinny, all of a sudden. "What's that?"

"Caw! Caw-caw!" came floating over the mountainside.

It wasn't a real crow; we could tell that. Someone must be calling to us. Pretty soon it came again.

“Caw!” yelled Bill, as loud as he could. “Caw-caw!”

We listened and then the answer came, faint and far off, but it was an answer; we felt sure of that. Cawing as we went, we hurried toward the sound, wondering who was doing it.

After a while, the answer came from the other side of some bushes. In another second a man crashed through them and stood staring at us, first at one and then another, as if he was trying to make sure we all were there.

It was Mr. Norton, and it seemed good to see him. We ran to him with a shout, asking him where he came from and how he happened to find us.

“Happened to find you!” he exclaimed, and there seemed to be nicks in his voice. “We’ve been looking for you since last night. This way now and hurry up about it.”

He turned and strode off through the bushes so fast we hardly could keep up with him. After a little we came to a road and, farther on, to a horse and wagon hitched to a tree.

“In with you,” he said, and without waiting to

see whether we were in or not, started the horse down the mountain road, while we sat looking at one another and waiting for him to say something.

"Skinny," he asked, at last, "what is the first Scout law?"

"A Scout is trustworthy," said Skinny, hanging his head.

"How about it, Jim? Is that right?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you say, William?"

"That is the way you taught it to us," said Bill.

"'A Scout is trustworthy.' There is a lot more to it in some of the books but that is what it means."

"It must be true if you all say so. How comes it, then, that you fellows have failed in your trust? Tell me that.

"If a Scout is trustworthy and you have shown yourselves untrustworthy," he went on, when nobody had anything to say, "it follows that you are no longer Scouts, doesn't it? And not being Scouts, what right have you to wear that uniform? I want you to take those uniforms off as soon as you get

home and keep them off until I can bring the matter before the Board."

We didn't know what to think. Mr. Norton never had talked to us that way before and it scared us.

"I'd like to hear what you have to say for yourselves."

"We ought to have come by the road," Skinny told him. "Then it wouldn't have happened, but we'd have been all right, anyhow, if it hadn't been for the storm, and we couldn't help that. We couldn't climb down the mountain after dark. You told us once never to do that but to build a fire and go into camp. That is what we did."

"You did exactly right there. I am not finding any fault with that. Neither am I finding fault because you did not come home by the Florida road. It was a mistake but it was a mistake in judgment and we all make such mistakes sometimes. But here is what counts: Since then we have had twelve hours of daylight and you are not home yet. Your people have been frightened almost out of their senses. You should have started down the mountain as

soon as you could see this morning. Didn't you realize that your folks would be half crazy with anxiety?"

"It isn't quite as bad as that, Mr. Norton," I told him, when he seemed to be expecting me to say something, being scribe, "although it is bad enough. You see, we got separated and lost while looking for water and couldn't find each other again. Then the storm came and we scattered still farther, trying to find shelter. After the storm, Benny and I, who were together, built a fire and went into camp for the night. We had no idea where we were, or which way to go. Skinny and Dick found our camp afterward in the night but we didn't find the others until almost noon to-day. It didn't seem right to leave them on the mountain, not knowing but that somebody had been struck by lightning, or was sick or something. We looked for them a long time and all that time they were looking for us. When we finally found each other it was almost noon. That was when we sent up the smoke signal. Did you see it?"

"Yes, fortunately your mother discovered it.

We thought it was you but couldn't be certain. Why didn't you hurry home after that?"

"We were hungry and stopped to eat berries on the way. Then we went in swimming in a brook and a bear scared us. We couldn't go home because he was standing on our clothes. Besides, we were up a tree. We got our clothes as soon as we dared and then chased the bear. That is what we were doing when we heard you call."

"You were up a tree, were you?" said he, and I thought I could see a twinkle in his eyes. "Evidently that was the proper place to be under the circumstances."

He drove a little way without speaking. "Now, look here, fellows," said he, when we had come to a good piece of road. "It isn't as bad as I thought at first and I'll take that back about the uniforms but let me tell you what has happened at home while you have been fooling around up here.

"Benny Wade's mother is sick in bed and under the care of a physician, because of worry. The mothers of you other boys are nearly as badly off and the fathers, not much better. This has been a

terrible strain on them. Not one of us got any sleep last night. Mr. Smith and I started for Florida, on top of the mountain, at four o'clock this morning. I have given up all to-day to looking for you boys and trying to cheer up your folks, and I could ill afford to spend the time. We all have worried ourselves nearly sick about you.

"Pedro, what do you think of a boy who would make his mother—and such a mother!—suffer as you have done?"

"I think he ought to be put out of the patrol," I told him. It was an awful thing to say but I meant every word of it.

"There is another phase of it," he went on. "You have 'put me in bad' with your folks. They trusted their boys to me and I trusted you, for 'a Scout is trustworthy.' You went back on me. But what I want to impress upon you most of all is that after this you should give some thought to your folks. They love you. It would almost kill them should anything serious happen to you. It would destroy their happiness.

"Fellows, listen! You hold their happiness in

your hands. Guard it as you would your life. That is your trust; and remember the law, 'a Scout is trustworthy.' "

But our folks didn't scold us. Mine didn't, anyhow. They were too glad to see me.

CHAPTER XX

"DEVIL'S HOPPER."

IT is queer how soon one gets used to things. We had been clear to Boston, camping out near the ocean, and we'd had all kinds of trouble climbing over the mountain, but in two days it seemed as if we hadn't been away.

Of course, we had to go to the cave the first thing, and take a look at Peck's Falls; and we had to go swimming at the Basin. After that everything seemed as it always had been except that some of the boys hadn't come home yet. They were away with their folks, visiting or something.

One after another, they came back, until the Ravens were all together once more and ready for anything, although vacation was going too fast to suit us.

Nothing happened for a long time after that. I mean nothing big except—but Skinny says to put that in later.

“ I want you Ravens to teach the boys of Tiger Patrol all you can about scouting before school begins,” Mr. Norton had told us. “ I'll go with you as often as I can spare the time.”

We went out two or three times a week, showing them how to fix up a camp and cook out of doors; how to follow a trail; how to signal with smoke and flags; how to rescue folks who are drowning and bring them back to life; how to fix them up when they get hurt, and all the other things that Boy Scouts have to learn before they can be Boy Scouts. They had learned some of it down at the seashore but it takes a lot of time to learn it all.

Sometimes the Eagles went with us and we explored the mountains in every direction. It was great fun and we grew to like the Summer Street Gang even better than we like the Gingham Ground Gang except Jim. They were not half bad when we came to know them better. I've noticed that it 'most always is that way.

The best trip of all was a long hike which the three patrols took with Mr. Norton, our Scout-master.

“ I can’t stand it any longer,” he said to Skinny one day. “ I have worked hard and steadily for two weeks, with the mountains calling me all the time. Now I am ready to break away for a day. What do you say to taking the Tigers out for a hike and putting them through some of the Scout stunts? ”

That sounded good to Skinny. “ Where’ll we go? ” he asked.

“ It doesn’t matter to me. Suppose that you get the boys together and decide. These hills are glorious in every direction. Eagle Patrol might like to go along. We can have a sort of field day together; take along enough food for dinner and supper, and wind up with a campfire somewhere, coming home by moonlight. There will be a full moon next Saturday and that will be the best day for me to get off.”

That is why, a little later when I was on the way to the postoffice, I saw our Sign chalked up on the bridge and another on the walk in front of the post-office, calling a meeting at the cave at four o’clock that afternoon.

A little after three, the boys began to gather at our barn, where we hold our meetings in the winter. They came one at a time, sort of loafing down the street as if they were not going anywhere in particular. On reaching our gate, they would stop there a minute, lean up against one of the posts and look up and down the street to see if anyone was watching. Then those of us who were in the barn would hear a “caw” from out in front.

“Caw, caw,” we'd answer, and in a moment more the boys would come running in. In this way all had come except Skinny and Bill. We couldn't understand what was keeping them and watched for them from the barn windows, those which look out toward Park Street, although there was no telling which way Skinny would come.

After a while we heard a great cawing in Blackinton's orchard, on the hillside beyond our garden, and ran out to see what it all was about. There came Skinny and Bill, each with a club, whacking away at the enemy. Suddenly, they made a rush and jumped down over the wall into our garden;

then, fighting all the way, backed down a garden path to the barn, darted in and were safe.

“ Are we all here, Pedro? ” asked Skinny, as soon as he could speak. Then, when I told him that we were, “ Come on. Let’s go to the cave. It’s ’most four o’clock. ”

Just as he said that and before we had time to get started, we heard a call,

“ Caw! Caw-caw! ”

Skinny looked at me, then counted the boys. There were eight of us.

“ Maybe it is Tom, ” I said.

“ No; Tom is going to be busy all day. He told me so. ”

“ Then who can it be? ”

“ I’ll tell you who it is, ” shouted Skinny, getting mad. “ It’s one of those Tigers using our signal, and they haven’t any business to use it. ’Tain’t our fault that they don’t know how to growl like a tiger. Come on, fellers; we’ll put a head on him, whoever it is. ”

“ Caw! Caw-caw! ” came the call again, as we rushed out of the barn.

There wasn't a Tiger in sight anywhere but there, on the back stoop, stood my mother, cawing to beat the band. It surprised us.

"I thought that would fetch you," she laughed. "I'm in great trouble and need to be rescued. I have just fried a batch of doughnuts and must have made a mistake for there are more than we can eat. Do you boys know anybody who would be willing to help us out?"

"O, John," she added, when she saw us starting, "how would it do for each of you to bring an armful of wood when you come? The box is entirely empty."

It was after four when we climbed down the ravine at Peck's Falls and crawled through the opening into the cave. Skinny never likes to have us late but this time he was as much to blame as any of us.

"We couldn't help being late," he said. "Scout law says for us to do an act of kindness every day and when Pedro's mother asks us to help her out on doughnuts, we've got to do it, meetin' or no meetin'."

“ And I want somebody to make a motion,” he went on, “ to have her elected an hon’ry member of Raven Patrol; then she can caw whenever she wants to.”

“ I’ll make a motion,” said Wally.

“ Guess what,” Benny told us. “ How can a lady be a Boy Scout? ”

“ We took Teacher into the Band, didn’t we? ” said Bill. “ What’s the difference? ”

“ Those in favor of making her an hon’ry member of Raven Patrol,” shouted Skinny, “ so that she can caw whenever she makes too many doughnuts, say aye.”

“ Pedro’s mother is now a member,” he told us, after the noise had died away, “ and—listen, fellers! —it’s up to you to keep her woodbox full when you are around.”

That having been settled, we talked over the hike and decided to go up on Greylock the very next Saturday. We hadn’t been to the top of the mountain since Bill sprained his ankle up there. Then we saw the Eagles and Tigers and reported to Mr. Norton.

“ Fine! ” said he. “ That suits me exactly. I haven’t been on Greylock this year. Tell the boys to meet at Pedro’s at half past seven Saturday morning, with rations for all day. We shall want to get an early start so that we can have time to practise our Scout stunts as we go along.”

Mr. Norton thinks it is better, in going to the cave or Greylock, to go around the road by Maple Street and the Quaker Meeting House, or else go up the railroad track and through Plunkett’s woods. He says that sometimes folks don’t like to have a lot of boys trooping through their yard. But we don’t see why, as long as we are careful not to scare the cow.

You see, we ’most always go the Blackinton way because it is easiest and shortest. My folks wouldn’t care a bit if we went through our yard but there is a high wall at the end of the garden, which keeps us from climbing up, although sometimes we jump down.

Then there’s Phillips’s on the other side. A steep path goes up through Phillips’s orchard, down which we sometimes slide in winter, taking care not to

hit a big tree at the bottom. There isn’t any cow but a fence shuts off the hill beyond the orchard and there are a lot of grapevines in the way of climbing over.

Blackinton’s driveway, leading to a path through the orchard, is just right because there is a gate in the fence beyond. That is what a gate is for, to go through, unless it is more fun to jump over.

When Saturday came at last, we didn’t care what way we went, as long as we went some way. While we were eating breakfast at our house we heard some yelling out in the street and the sound of a drum. I hustled out to the front steps to see what was going on. The Eagles were marching up Park Street, with a flag and drum and all in their Scout uniforms. They waved their hats and cheered when they saw me and Benny, who had run out of his house at about the same time. I was just going to meet them when my mother called.

“ John Alexander,” said she, “ do you want to go up on Greylock to-day? If you do, come back here and finish your breakfast.”

When she says “ John Alexander,” like that, it

means business. But it didn’t take long to finish. I was most through, anyhow, and ten or twelve more pancakes with maple syrup on them slipped down fast.

The Eagles marched into the back yard but pretty soon ran out into the street again, for there was some more cheering. The Tigers were crossing the bridge toward our house, wearing for the first time the new uniforms Mr. Norton got for them and looking so proud and happy we hardly knew them. The Ravens straggled in just as it happened. Pretty soon all were there and the yard was full of Scouts.

Then Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster, came. Mother saw him first and set up a great cheering and waving of her apron. For a few minutes after that our yard was the noisiest place in town, with cawing of crows, shrieking of eagles and growling of tigers.

“ Has everybody had enough to eat? ” asked mother, trying to make herself heard. “ I’ve got some batter left. You mustn’t go away hungry. ”

“ Has everybody a water bottle? ” shouted Mr. Norton.

“ What time shall we expect you back? ” called father.

“ Has Skinny got his rope along? ” I yelled.

Nobody answered any of the questions and nobody seemed to expect an answer. The flag and drum were left on the back stoop; then we marched out of the yard and turned north in Park Street. We were on our way.

We marched in line, each patrol keeping by itself, until we had gone around by the west road and turned into the road which leads up the mountain past Peck’s Falls. After that we marched as we pleased. It is hard enough to climb a steep mountain without keeping step when you are doing it.

First we stopped to see Peck’s Falls. The Ravens had seen the falls so many times we didn’t care much about stopping but the others hadn’t and Mr. Norton said that he didn’t have a chance to go up there very often. But when Skinny saw me and Benny looking down toward the cave, he put his fingers to his lips and shook his head.

“ We mustn’t show them the cave, ” he whispered.

“ Peck’s Falls are Peck’s Falls but our cave is something else. Mum’s the word.”

Soon we passed the last farm and the road began to grow poorer and poorer, being used only by woodchoppers, until after a little there wasn’t any road at all and not very much of a path. Then there was no such thing as keeping step or anything else except hard work. We dug our shoes in and struggled upward, stopping to rest often and to look up and down the valley, which seemed to grow larger every time we looked.

When at last we came to the spring we stopped, for we knew that there was no water beyond, on the east side of the mountain, or on top.

“ There is no hurry,” Mr. Norton told us. “ We can practise our Scout stunts here just as well as on top of the mountain and after a time we can cook and eat our dinner. I think we’d all rather eat here where there is plenty of cool water.”

Dinner time came early, for we were hungry. Some of us brought wood for a fire; others went after berries. Mr. Norton and Skinny showed the Tigers how to build a fire without much kindling

and by using only one match; how to make coffee and fry bacon and bake potatoes in the ashes.

There never was a better dinner than that, with all Hoosic valley at our feet, and over to the north of us, the Bellows Pipe and the Notch, the green of the high shut-in valley stretching as far as we could see, with cows feeding there.

Scouts do not feel much like climbing after they have filled up on good things like we cooked or had brought with us; so we lay around talking and planning other trips. But Mr. Norton sat by himself a long time, without saying a word, just looking down at our village, up and down the valley, and at Hoosac mountain range opposite.

Then he called us around him and talked about Greylock. He told us that men who have made a study of such things say that the top of Greylock was the original level of our part of the state and that the valleys have been carved out by what is called erosion, which means, he said, worn away by glaciers and by running water.

“ How did the mountain come to be called Greylock? ” asked Harry.

“ Didn’t you ever see a cloud resting on the summit of the mountain, with wisps of clouds trailing out behind like gray hair? Probably something like that suggested the name to one of the early settlers.”

“ That must have been a long time ago.”

“ Yes, white men have been here since long before the Revolutionary War. North Adams and Adams, as I have told you, were named for Samuel Adams, the Boston patriot, not long after the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga. When was that? ”

We couldn’t tell him.

“ I am not certain myself but think it was in October, 1778. The old Quaker Meeting House was built back in 1786; so, you see, it is almost as old as the Nation, which, after all, is not very old compared with Greylock and Bob’s Hill.”

He said a lot more which I cannot remember; then, all of a sudden, exclaimed,

“ By the way, I have something in my pocket which may interest you.”

He pulled out a map and spread it on the ground, while we gathered around to look.

“ This is what is called a ‘ topographic map ’ of the Greylock district. It was prepared as a part of a geological survey by the Government for the purpose of making a topographic atlas of the United States. To anybody accustomed to read such maps, it presents an accurate picture of our entire valley and the surrounding mountains. See, there in the center is our river, spelled ‘ Hoosic,’ while the tunnel and east mountain range are spelled ‘ Hoosac.’ ”

“ I see the Raven Rocks,” shouted Jim, pointing on the map to a place opposite Renfrew, where the Gingham Grounds are.

“ If you look closely you will see most of the places with which you are familiar—Greylock; the Bellows Pipe; the Notch; Tophet brook, where the Basin is; Peck’s brook, where Peck’s Falls are, and many others.”

“ What are all those funny lines for? ” one of the Tigers asked.

“ Wait! ” called Skinny, as Mr. Norton was about to answer. “ Pedro, you put what Mr. Nor-

ton says in the minutes of the meetin'. Boy Scouts have to know about such things."

"Put in the map, too," ordered Bill.

"I am not good enough on the draw," I told them.

"You can trace it through thin paper," said Mr. Norton, "leaving out, if necessary, some of the contour lines, for that is what those curving lines are called. Those lines can be read like print by those who know how. Look close and you will see some of the lines marked with figures. That small circle which indicates the top of Greylock is marked 3505. That is the height of the mountain peak in feet above sea level. Just west of Adams is a line marked 900, which means, I take it, that Bob's Hill is almost 900 feet above sea level. About halfway between Adams and the 900 mark is a tiny circle, which, I think, indicates the summit of Bob's Hill.

"Now, follow that 900 line with your eyes. Do you see it curve around? You can trace it all over the map nearly. At every portion of that line the elevation is the same, 900 feet above sea level.



This is true of every line shown. That is why they twist about so. Each line curves in various directions, following its own level as the topography, that is, level, of the ground changes; and it changes very rapidly among these Berkshire Hills.

“ These contour lines show the shapes of the hills, as well as their height. Where the contour lines are far apart on the map, they indicate a gentle slope; where they are close together they indicate a steep slope, and where they run together in one line they indicate a cliff. It would be a good idea for each patrol to have one or more of these maps to refer to. They can be obtained from the United States Geological Survey, at Washington, D. C., for ten cents each.”

“ We don’t need any map to tell us that Greylock is steep,” said Skinny, “ Come on; let’s go up the rest of the way.”

Then we started for the hardest climb of all, just before the top.

It gives one a queer feeling to stand on top of Greylock, the very highest point in all Massachusetts, and look far down at houses that seem like

toys. The Eagle Ground looked like a square in a checkerboard and our twin stones, like tiny thimbles.

After a time we grew tired of looking and started in to have some fun.

"I wish you Tigers would remain with me," Mr. Norton told them. "I want to find out how much you have learned about scouting. You others may do what you please, as long as you do not get lost and that hardly is possible under the circumstances. Show up again in about two hours."

"I'll tell you what let's do," said Skinny. "The Ravens will be bandits and the Eagles can track us to our den. We'll make a trail with pieces of paper and by breaking bushes but it won't be easy to find us; will it, fellers?"

"All right," laughed Mr. Norton. "That suits me, only don't go too far, and if you should need us for any reason, send up three smokes. Be careful of your fires; you mustn't let them spread in the woods. I have a field glass with me and once every half hour your Scoutmaster is going to climb on that rock and look for trouble."

“ Let us get a good start, Jim,” yelled Skinny, and the Ravens, cawing as they went, hurried down the west side of the mountain.

It was great fun, winding and twisting through the woods and up and down ledges, leaving a trail that we knew the Eagles could follow if they were good at it.

After a long time we came to what looked like the jumping-off place, where the slope of the mountain dropped suddenly into a deep hollow, with a wildness that almost scared us.

“ It’s Devil’s Hopper,” said Bill. “ Don’t you remember? We saw it from the other side that time we were lost up here. They left out the ‘ devil ’ part on the map.”

It wasn’t easy going down into the Hopper, as the sides were steep and rough and thick with trees and bushes. We had to be careful not to fall, but we made our way down at last and stopped to look around.

“ It’s a good place for bandits, all right,” said Harry, “ but where is their den? ”

“ It’s here somewhere,” Skinny told him.

“ There is bound to be a cave here somewhere. There couldn’t help being. It looks cavy.”

We were so busy hunting for it that we forgot all about the Eagles and the trail. But there wasn’t a thing that looked like a cave anywhere in sight and we only happened to find it. Skinny and Bill were wrestling. Bill was climbing some rocks and Skinny had him by the legs pulling him back, when Bill caught hold of some bushes, bending them down.

Skinny gave one look back of them and saw a great hole leading into the mountain, then started through the Hopper on a run.

“ We’ve found it!” he yelled. “ We’ve found the bandits’ den!”

CHAPTER XXI

THE BANDITS' DEN

SOMEHOW it seemed different, finding a cave at Peck's Falls, where there were houses not far away, from finding one at the bottom of the Hopper, the wildest place we ever had seen. After a few minutes Skinny came back and we crowded around to look at it.

"Guess what," said Benny. "It must be Devil's Cave. It is called Devil's Hopper, you know. Dast we go in?"

That is what we all were thinking. Benny and I grabbed Bill and tried to push him in but he jumped back in a hurry and broke away.

"Not much, you don't," said he. "It ain't that I am afraid but it's up to Skinny to go in first. I am only assistant patrol leader."

"Huh!" exclaimed Skinny. "You're scared; that is what's the matter with you."

"Maybe I am and maybe I'm not," Bill told him. "It's up to you, just the same. I'm not afraid of the cave, anyhow, but how about the bandits? They are in there; I 'most know they are."

We all dodged back. It made us nervous to have Bill talk that way.

"Let's light out of this," said Hank. "Even if they are not there, they may come back any minute and find us. Here they come now!"

He hadn't any more than got the words out of his mouth when we heard them. There were some terrible yells, a great crashing in the bushes back of us and somebody shouted,

"Now we've got 'em!"

"Run!" gasped Skinny, dodging behind a tree and out of sight.

He needn't have wasted any breath saying that for we all were running as hard as we could when he spoke. I guess maybe we'd be running still if we hadn't heard somebody call,

"What's the matter with you Ravens? Come on back. It ain't fair; we found you."

It was Jim's voice. The noise hadn't been made

by bandits at all but by the Eagles who had tracked us to the bandits' den.

"All right," Skinny told them, pretending he had known who it was all the time. "If you don't want to play any more we'll quit running."

They were surprised when we showed them the cave. "She's a dandy," said Jim. "Have you been in?"

"Not very far. We were waiting for you."

Jim went to the hole and looked into the darkness inside. Then he picked up a stone and threw it in, while we all stood ready to run. We could hear it rattling around inside and could tell by the sound that the cave was a big one, a lot bigger than ours at home. Nothing happened, and nothing happened after that when each of us threw in a stone.

One of the boys made a little pile of leaves at the opening and set them on fire. The blaze drove away the dark for a minute and we could see that nobody was inside.

"Gee-whillikins!" shouted Skinny. "It's a bandits' den, all right, and I'll bet there are all kinds of treasure in it. Let's you and me go in, Jim. The

rest can watch and holler if they hear anybody coming. We'll divide the treasure; the Ravens can have half and the Eagles, half."

"The Ravens discovered the cave," Jim told him, wanting to be fair.

"O, that's all right. We'll give you half, just the same. Won't we, fellers?"

"How about the Tigers and Mr. Norton?" I asked.

"There will be enough for all of us. Come on, Jim."

Lighting matches as they went, they started in, side by side, while we waited on the outside and watched. When they had stayed inside so long that we began to be afraid something had happened to them, we heard a shout and a minute later they came out.

"Betcher life it's a bandits' den," said Skinny. "It ain't safe to stay around here; they may come back any minute."

He held up a coin. "We found that inside, and there are millions more like it. Yes, billions; maybe, sextillions."

"Great snakes!" I heard Bill say.

It made us all dizzy to think of so much money and ours, too, if we could get away with it but we were afraid to stay and we didn't know what to do.

"I wish Mr. Norton was here," I said. "He'd know what to do. Let's go after him."

"There ain't time," Skinny told me. "The bandits may come back. They may be up at the top of the Hopper now, looking down at us. Say, I have it. Three smokes! We'll signal, like Mr. Norton said. There ain't anything the matter with us and we ain't lost, but we want to see him, just the same."

We picked out a place where the trees were not so thick and built three fires a little way apart, piling on leaves until three columns of smoke went sailing up out of the Hopper. That is an Indian sign, meaning "I've lost the camp." Then we placed sentinels all around on every side. We felt sure that the bandits couldn't come within a quarter of a mile without somebody hearing them and giving the alarm.

Once after we had waited a long time I thought that I heard them coming; then a crow called from part way up the mountainside and we knew that it must be Mr. Norton. Benny answered and pretty soon our Scoutmaster and the Tigers came hurrying down toward us.

"What is the trouble, boys?" asked Mr. Norton, anxiously, as soon as he could get his breath. He had come in a hurry not knowing what had happened to us.

We told him about the bandits and their den and Skinny took a handful of coins out of his pocket and jingled them.

Mr. Norton gave a low whistle. "Did you find those in the cave?" he asked.

"Yes, and there are plenty more where they came from. Millions and billions of dollars."

"You come with me, Skinny. I want to be shown. The others may as well keep a careful watch. I think we are the only persons who have been here in many years, but we'll not take any chances."

In a few minutes he came out to the cave en-

trance and asked us all to go in, if we could get in, and to bring some dry leaves with us to use as torches. The light showed that we were in a big room-like place, which had been used by somebody to work in. On one side was an old furnace and there were some tools scattered about. In a corner was a tin boiler half full of coins like those Skinny had showed us.

Mr. Norton pointed out that the tools were rusty and could not have been used in many years.

"What kind of tools are they?" I asked.

"Boys," said he, "a very interesting thing has happened to us. Unless I am very much mistaken, we are the first ones who have set foot in this place in more than a hundred years. I remember of having read somewhere, although until now it had entirely slipped from my mind, that many years ago a den of counterfeiters was discovered in the Hopper. Their tools were taken to be used as evidence in case the men should be arrested. It couldn't have been this cave for the tools are here and the place has not been disturbed.

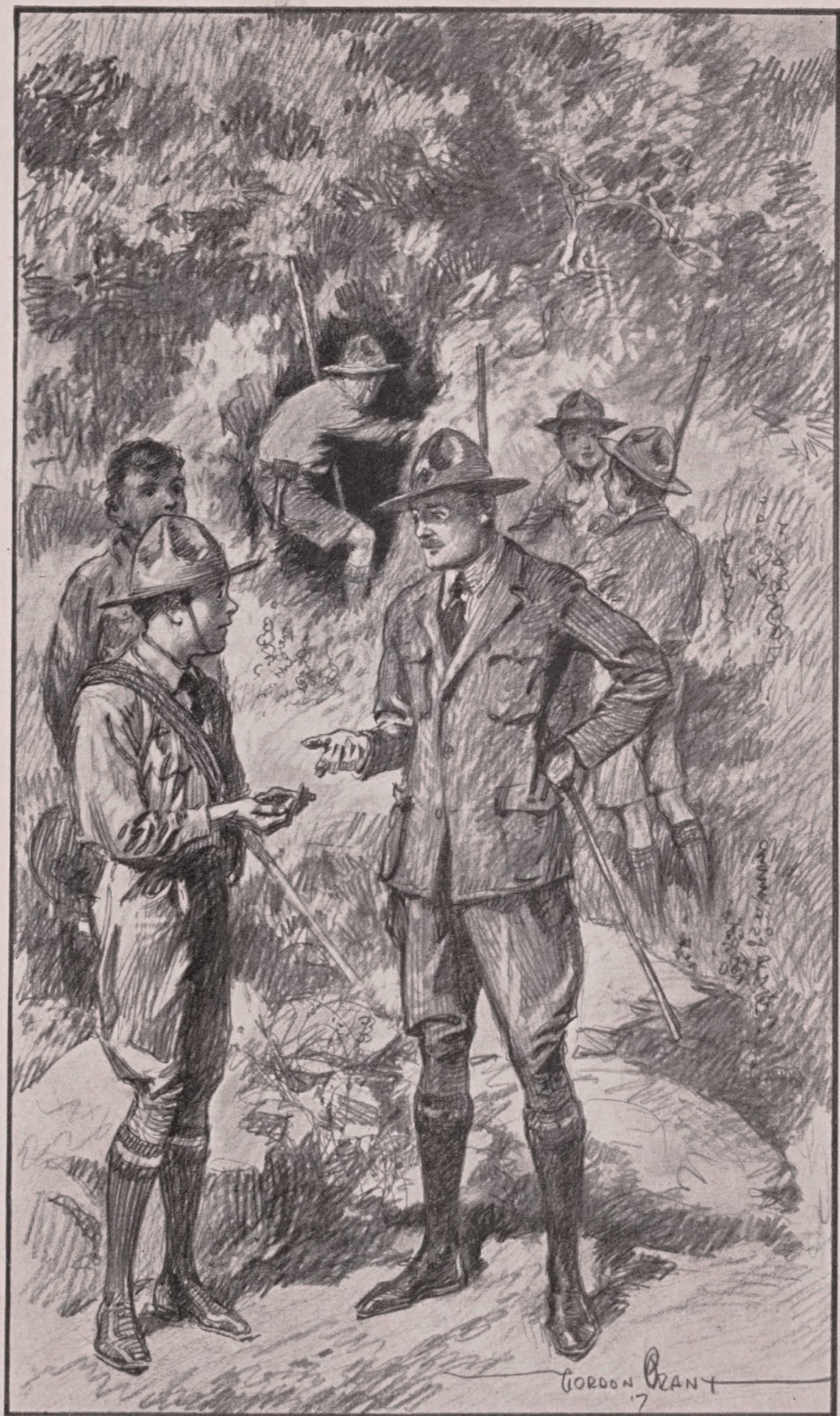
"It seems probable that there were two caves,

some distance apart, for greater safety, and duplicate sets of tools. These coins, I presume, are counterfeit money. We'll take some home with us to make sure and then, if I am correct, we'll turn the contents of the cave over to some historical society as interesting relics of crime. I'll look up the book also and read to you all that is known about those old counterfeiters."

We were all excited at first over finding the money and were hoping that it would turn out to be real. Skinny was sure that Captain Kidd, an old pirate, had hidden his treasure there and that if we should dig we'd find a lot more.

"He hid all kinds of treasure somewhere," he told us, "and it never has been found. I read it in a book."

However, Mr. Norton was right about it, although we didn't find out until afterward. He took some of the coins to the bank and the banker told him that they were counterfeit. Later, he found the book that told about the counterfeiters. It is called, "Perry's Origins in Williamstown," for Skinny made me copy it down to put in the minutes



MR. NORTON GAVE A LOW WHISTLE. "DID YOU FIND THOSE IN THE CAVE?" HE ASKED

of the meeting, and this is what it says, as you will see for yourself, if you look it up:

“One may descend to the Hopper from Bald Mountain by the Bacon Brook which unites its water near the bottom of the vast gorge with ‘Money Brook,’ so called. In one of the dismal gorges far up on the northern side of the Hopper, near Wilbur’s pasture, remote and inaccessible, where the foot of man has but very seldom trod in any age, and will tread but seldom till the end of time, a small gang of counterfeiters not long after 1800 had a concealed den beside this brook for their work of fraud. Tradition tells many a tale about these criminals which the prudent man will receive with caution, or not at all, but the main fact rests on firm historical grounds, and has properly given a euphonious name to the mountain brook. Mr. Kellogg of Troy, a native of the town and graduate of the college, in his old age repeatedly told the writer, and afterward put the statement in writing for better authentication, that when he was a boy there was an old tool chest in one of the chambers of his father’s house, which contained the tools and other apparatus of these counterfeiters which had been found in the Hopper and brought to his father as Justice of the Peace, to be used against the men should they be apprehended. The gang had abandoned their work and tools and had escaped the officers, but one man was arrested on suspicion and

brought before Judge Kellogg, but there was no legal evidence against him."

"Now the question is, what shall we do next?" said Mr. Norton, after we had looked at the cave all that we wanted to. "We can, if you like, make our way over into Williamstown and go home from there by trolley. It would be too much of a hike after a hard day to walk home from there. Or we can climb to the top of the mountain again for supper, hold our campfire there and go home by moonlight, as we planned at first. I shouldn't approve of starting down the mountain after sundown except for the fact that the air is as clear as a bell and the full moon will come up before we need to start. It will be almost as light as day."

We all said that we'd rather have our campfire on Greylock and listen to one of his stories. That is what we did, making a big fire at first, so that our folks could see it and see us passing in front of it, if they should be looking and wondering where we were.

Then, after a war dance, we threw ourselves down on the ground and waited for our Scoutmaster to

begin the story. A cool breeze from the southwest fanned the flames and blew the heat away from us. The sun had gone down in a sea of gold, far beyond Hudson River. Slowly the huge shadows of Bob's Hill, Greylock and the whole mountain range blotted out the village and climbed Hoosac range beyond. Tiny lights appeared in the gathering darkness, a few at first, then hundreds of them, all up and down Hoosic valley; overhead were the stars.

Mr. Norton, as he often does, sat looking for a long time without saying a word, until finally we reminded him about the story.

"Can you feel it, boys?" he asked, suddenly. "The wonder of it all? The mystery of it all? The beauty of it all? I believe you will remember this night as long as you live and in later years, through the memory, the part which you may be missing now will come to you. You boys don't have all there is in life. Don't think it for a minute. Just as you live in a little world of your own and a beautiful world, into which it is hard for us older people to enter, so we grown-up boys see and feel much that is hidden from you.

"You ask for a story, and you have been living a story all day long. The creation of the world is a long and wonderful story and it is a continued story. I say 'is,' not 'was,' because the work of creation is still going on. When nature gets through, or seems to, man begins another chapter, building a Hoosac Tunnel here and something else there.

"These mountains and valleys were formed ages ago and nature clothed them with beautiful garments of trees and grass for you and me to enjoy to-day. It seems a very long time since our valley was carved out, and it has been a long time, but ever since then this day which we have enjoyed so much up here on the mountain, this very day, was on the way; just as to-morrow is on the way and almost here, and as every day that comes has been on the way from the beginning. And, boys, this day which has been so long coming will never come again."

He sat quiet for a moment, sort of dreaming; then went on, "You are hoping that the coins which you found will turn out to be real money but, after all, these days that come and go, not money, are what

we buy things with. What we have, what we are and what we become, depend on how we spend these days, what we buy with them. We can buy money—real money—with these days. We can spend them for knowledge, for health, for character; we can spend them for wickedness and rottenness generally; but spend them for something we must.

“After ages and ages and ages, this day is here, and to-morrow soon will be here. What are you going to buy with to-morrow, Scouts? I think we have bought something worth while with to-day—the health which comes from outdoor life; the joy of companionship with clean fellows; inspiration from the rugged beauty of these mountains.”

“Look!” he continued, after a few moments, pointing across the valley.

In the east had appeared a rim of gold which, while we looked, grew larger and larger until the full moon leaped into view. It flooded the mountains with a soft radiance which soon poured down into the valley, lighting our path.

Through the moonlight our troop made its way homeward.

CHAPTER XXII

RAVENS TO THE RESCUE

VACATION went fast after that and soon we began to count the days that were left. One morning Skinny and I were sitting on our front steps, talking about the bandits' den and the counterfeit money, when we saw one of the Gingham Ground Gang—I mean Eagle Patrol—coming down the street and called him in.

"I can't stop," he told us. "I've got to find a job somewhere and find it quick."

"School will begin soon," said Skinny. "This is no time to be looking for a job."

"It's my father," he explained, wiping his eyes when he thought we were not looking. "He's awful sick and can't earn a cent. The doctor says that if he could be taken away to the seashore for a while he would get well but he might as well tell us to take him to the moon, unless I can earn a lot of money right away."

"Gee," said Skinny, "that's tough. Say! If the money we found up in the Hopper hadn't been counterfeit!"

"Have you told Mr. Norton?" I asked.

"No; what's the use of bothering him? He's done a lot already and he has troubles of his own."

"Just the same, he is a good one to see."

"Barney," Skinny broke in, growing excited at something he had been thinking, "never mind the job to-day. You hustle home and tell your father to get ready to go. The Band—I mean the Ravens—will see him through. I don't know how but we'll do it somehow. We'll find a way. Don't you see, Barney? That is what we are for, to rescue folks, and we haven't rescued anybody all summer. Scout law says for us to be helpful."

"I know it does. That is why I am looking for a job."

"Well, you hurry back and tell him what we are going to do. Maybe we can get Cap'n Jake to take him out in his dory when he gets down to the shore."

"Pedro," Skinny went on, after Barney had

started for home on a run to tell his folks, "we've got to get busy on this. This is our chance. Here we have been spending money all summer, having fun at the seashore, and Barney's father is dying because he hasn't the price of a ticket. It ain't fair."

"I know it isn't," I told him, "but what can we do? It would take more than the price of a ticket. Fifty dollars wouldn't be any too much, and I haven't fifty cents. I spent it all at the seashore."

"We're Scouts, ain't we? We can ask Mr. Norton, can't we? We'll get him to tell us what to do; then we'll do it."

"Good work!" shouted our Scoutmaster, when we called him out on his steps that evening and told him about it. "I know the very thing to do. In fact, I have been thinking about it some time, with the idea of raising a fund for next summer's trip. This will be a better use of the money. We well people will stay at home if necessary. Come in and sit down while I tell you about it."

What he said was for us to give a show, not a circus or anything like that, but an entertainment at

some church and charge twenty-five cents apiece for people to get in and see our Scout stunts.

"They wouldn't pay money for that, would they?" I said.

"They are getting crazy about it," he told us, "and are asking me all kinds of questions. Your finding the counterfeiters' den in the Hopper has set everybody to talking about the Scouts and people want to know more about the Scout movement in general. We can show them, and make some money for Barney at the same time. We shall be doing something for the Scouts, too, because more families will become interested in the movement. Maybe we shall be able to get another troop out of it. I think we can get the use of one of the churches free, or by paying for light and janitor service at the most. It will be good church work. There are twenty-four boys in my three patrols and each of you can sell ten tickets without any trouble at all. There are sixty dollars right off the bat."

"Gee, you make my head ache," said Skinny. "It would be great but it would take too long. Barney's father will be getting sicker all the time."

"That is true; there should be no delay in his case. Of course, we might raise the money by solicitation but you Scouts ought to do this thing and not leave it for others. I'll tell you how we can fix it. I know somebody who will advance what money we need at once and wait for his pay until after the entertainment. Hold a meeting of the Ravens to-morrow, then come up here and talk it over with me. If the fellows all will agree to take hold of the work, I'll get busy."

When the Ravens met the next day and we told them Mr. Norton's plan, everybody was for it, not only the Ravens but the Tigers and Eagles.

"That is fine," Mr. Norton said, when we had reported. "Now you fellows go ahead and work up a program that will be worth the price of admission. We are not asking for donations. Get the other patrols to meet with you. I'll appoint Skinny chairman of the entertainment committee. Pick out some good stunts that can be done on a platform, like tying knots, bandaging a broken leg, bringing life back to a drowning person, making fire by friction, and so on.

"Some Scouts gave an entertainment in New York a few nights ago and, among other things, exhibited the various flags which preceded and finally led up to Old Glory, as we know it and love it. A line of Scouts marched up on the platform carrying those old flags and each boy in turn told the story of the flag he was carrying. It was interesting. I can borrow the whole outfit from the New York Scoutmaster; I know I can.

"Then, people ought to be made to realize what Boy Scouts stand for. Some of them do not know that this movement is making for manhood in its truest and best sense. Here we have twelve Scout laws; to repeat them will not be enough. Act them out. Appoint a committee, Skinny, to work out a dozen little acts, or tableaux, which will explain what you boys understand these Scout laws to mean. It will be like acting charades. I'll arrange for the church and the advertising and get the tickets printed and help in every way I can. Meanwhile, we'll send Barney's father down to the seashore at once, and send his mother along to take care of him."

"Whew!" said Skinny, mopping his forehead with his handkerchief as we went out into the street. "Ain't he a regular Gee Whizz? I'm 'most tired already."

"O, boys," called Mr. Norton. "We've forgotten something. What in the world shall we do with Barney? He can't stay at home alone."

"I'll ask my folks to let him come and visit me," I told him.

"Fine!" he shouted. "Tell your mother, Pedro, not to feed Barney so many doughnuts that we'll have to send him down to the shore to recuperate."

The next week was a busy one for Raven Patrol and for the whole troop. We couldn't have done it without Mr. Norton's help but he kept us going, until we had worked up a program that we knew would give the people their money's worth.

Then something happened which came near putting us Ravens out of business.

We were all ready for the entertainment and had nothing to do but wait, when Skinny said that he was tired out practising and wanted us to go on a

hike the next day, so that he could rest up for the show.

“ But it comes off to-morrow night and four hundred tickets have been sold,” somebody said. “ That means a hundred dollars.”

“ I know it but we are all ready. There is nothing more to do. We’ll come home feeling great.”

“ Where’ll we go? ”

“ Let’s go up to Natural Bridge above North Adams. We have been talking about going up there a long time. We can ride back.”

That is what we decided to do. Pulpit Rock at Peck’s Falls is almost a natural bridge but up above North Adams is a regular natural bridge and we wanted to see it. It is on the way to Stamford and is a bridge of white marble over Hudson brook, which runs at the bottom of a gorge, about sixty feet below. The gorge—maybe five hundred feet long—begins with a waterfall and there is a wild ravine beyond.

We started on our hike early next morning in order to get home early, in case there should be something to do at the last minute, everyone in

uniform. Benny marched ahead, holding up a big American flag. Hank went last, carrying a banner on which he had painted the Sign, calling a meeting at the church at eight o'clock and asking everybody to come out and see the Scout stunts of the Ravens and help along the "caws." A lot of folks read it, laughed and said they would be there.

We marched through North Adams as big as life and crowds of people ran out to see us. It made us feel proud. Once a lady stopped us and wanted to know about the "caws" part. When we had told her about Barney's father at the seashore, she said for us to give the show at her church and she would promise us twenty-five dollars, anyhow, and maybe more.

We told her that we would and we did but that doesn't belong in this history.

"Everybody caw!" shouted Skinny.

She went away, laughing and holding her hands over her ears, because she had been standing close to Bill Wilson.

The Ravens played around Natural Bridge until noon; then we ate our lunch and played some more.

When we finally were ready to start for home, all of a sudden Bill yelled,

“Follow the leader!”

Away he ran, with the rest of us following after. Round and round we chased him, doing everything that he did, climbing rocks, jumping off, and all kinds of crazy stunts. Then, when I had stopped to get my breath, I saw him step out on a flume which crosses the gorge, high above the rocks. It was wet and slippery. Skinny was not far behind. He hesitated when he came to the flume; then started, wetting his lips with his tongue as he felt his way across.

The rest of us watched and waited. Nobody likes to take a dare but what is the sense in getting killed for nothing. That's what I say.

Slowly the two boys made their way out over the gorge and might have crossed all right if Bill, who knew that Skinny was behind him, hadn't begun to act smart. Suddenly as we watched, hardly daring to breathe, he slipped and, with a yell of fright, fell.

I tried to shut my eyes, for I didn't want to see it, but could not stop looking. Then, as he fell, I

saw Bill reach out his arms, grab the flume and hang there by his hands, with a look on his face which I never can forget.

When Bill slipped and yelled, it scared Skinny and he began to sway and totter, until we thought that every second he would lose his balance and fall. Finally, he caught himself and was able to stand still, looking down into Bill's eyes which were filled with horror and fear.

"Your rope!" we yelled; then waited, white to the lips.

That was all we could do, just wait, and maybe see Skinny and Bill both dashed to death on the rocks below.

Balancing himself on the flume, Skinny uncoiled his rope which he had been carrying around his shoulders, ready to start for home. Carefully he stooped down until he could get hold of the flume with his hands; then he straddled it and felt safe.

"Hang on, Bill, I'll save you," we heard him say, as he worked himself along the flume with his hands.

When he was almost over Bill he wrapped the rope around the flume, took tight hold of the short end and let the other drop.

We groaned when we saw it, for the end didn't reach anywhere near the bottom of the gorge where we stood, but it was all that could be done.

With Skinny holding to his collar with one hand, Bill caught hold of the rope, first with one hand, then with both, and then coiled his feet around it and began to slide down, while Skinny pulled on the end to keep it from slipping. There wasn't any time to tie knots. Bill couldn't have hung on much longer.

"Drop!" we shouted, when Bill came to the end of the rope. "We'll catch you."

We did, enough to break his fall, although I thought he would knock the breath so far out of me when he struck that I'd never get it back again. While he lay there on the rocks, white and weak, and the others not much better off, Skinny, still straddling the flume, dropped his rope and hitched himself back with his hands a few inches at a time until he could catch hold of some rocks at the end

and pull himself up. In a few minutes more he came down to where we were.

“Gee-whillikins, Bill!” said he. “You ’most spoiled the show.”

That was a great entertainment. Everybody was there and seemed glad to be there. Mr. Norton, looking fine in a new scoutmaster uniform, called off the different numbers on the program. He explained what we were trying to do and what the Boy Scout movement stood for. The church was crowded and the people applauded like sixty.

Just the same, we gave a sigh of relief when it was all over and the folks were getting up to go. But before they could leave my father rushed up on the platform and asked them to wait a minute. You could have knocked me down with a feather and I could see that Skinny and the other boys, and Mr. Norton, were as surprised as I was.

“We have all enjoyed this entertainment,” he went on, as soon as it was quiet, “and we are glad to help in the good work which these boys have been doing; but a few of us who, perhaps, have been closer to the Scout movement than others, on ac-

count of our boys being in it, wish to give a more substantial expression to something which is in our hearts to-night. We thoroughly believe in the aims and purposes of the Boy Scouts of America but, whatever its aims, this great organization would fall far short in its usefulness without the right kind of men for scoutmasters.

“Some of us who have watched Scoutmaster Norton here and who have seen our boys grow in manliness, helpfulness and strength of character under his guidance and training, and who realize how much of his own time and energy he has given up to the work, wish to thank him publicly, and we ask him to accept and wear this watch as a small token of our appreciation and esteem.”

How the people clapped! Mr. Norton was real fussed and didn't know what to say but Skinny, climbing on a chair, yelled to the Ravens, “Everybody caw!”

“Caw! Caw-caw!” roared through the church, while the crowd looked on in surprise.

“Eagles!” called Jim, “Do your best. *Now!*”

“Tigers! Go to it!” shouted Dick, trying to

make his voice heard above the racket. There never was so much noise in a church before.

"I certainly thank you all," said Mr. Norton, finding his voice at last, "but I could have done little without the good will and help of their parents. My heart is too full to say more. I only ask you to look at these boys and tell me if they are not worth all it has cost."

"Pedro," said Skinny on the way home, "put it all in the minutes of the meetin'; and put in not to ever go out without a rope."

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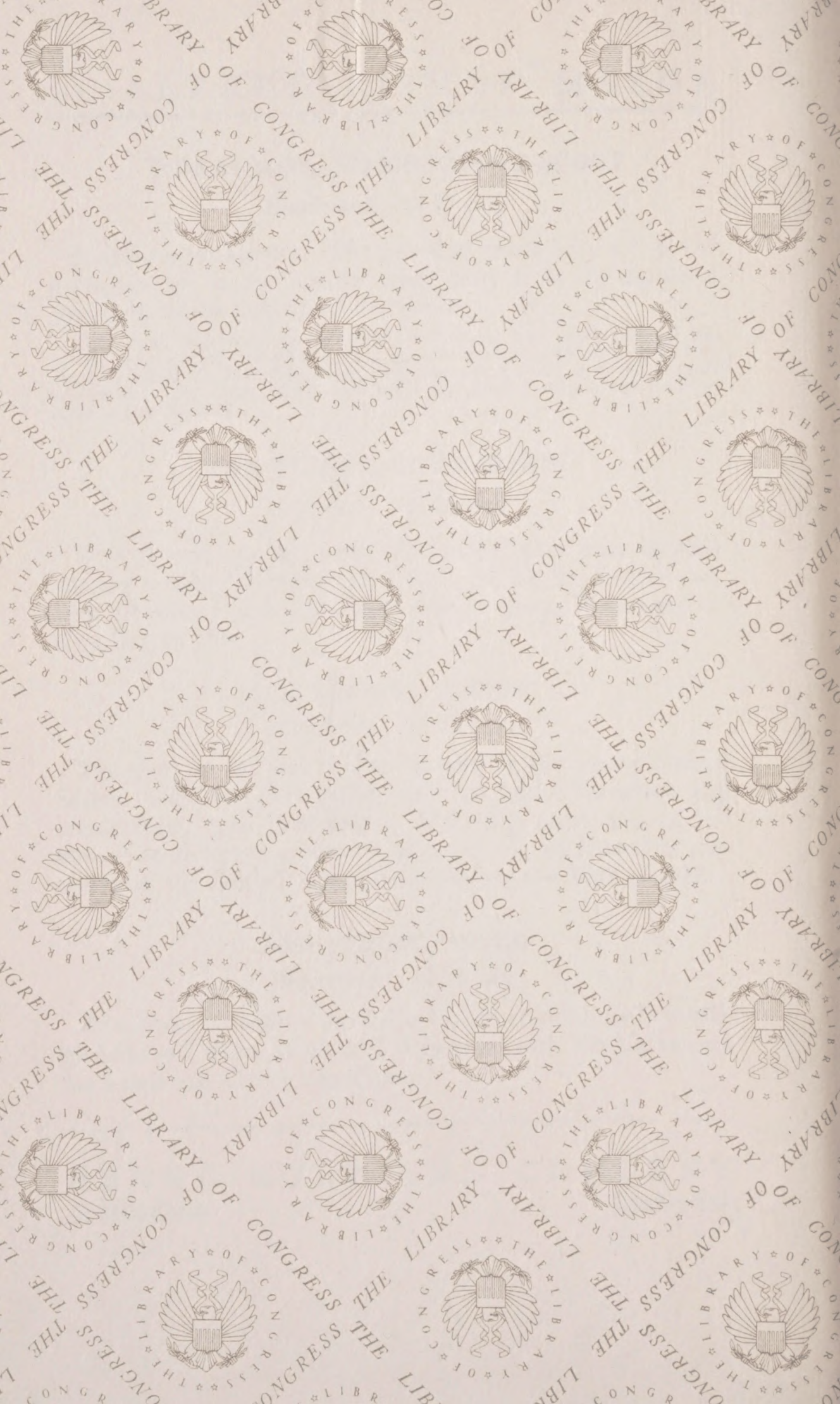
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